CYCLE GUIDE

TESTS: Yamaha FZ750, Honda VT1100C Shadow, Yamaha YZ250, Suzuki GS1150E

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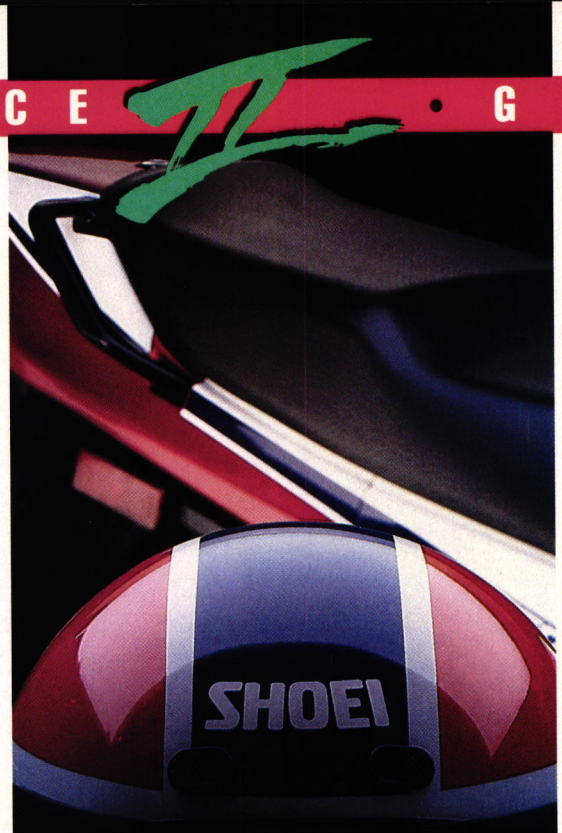

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QUOTE:
"... down-to-earth technology, using none of those anti-link-pro-dive-full-flipper frills."—**Pg.38**

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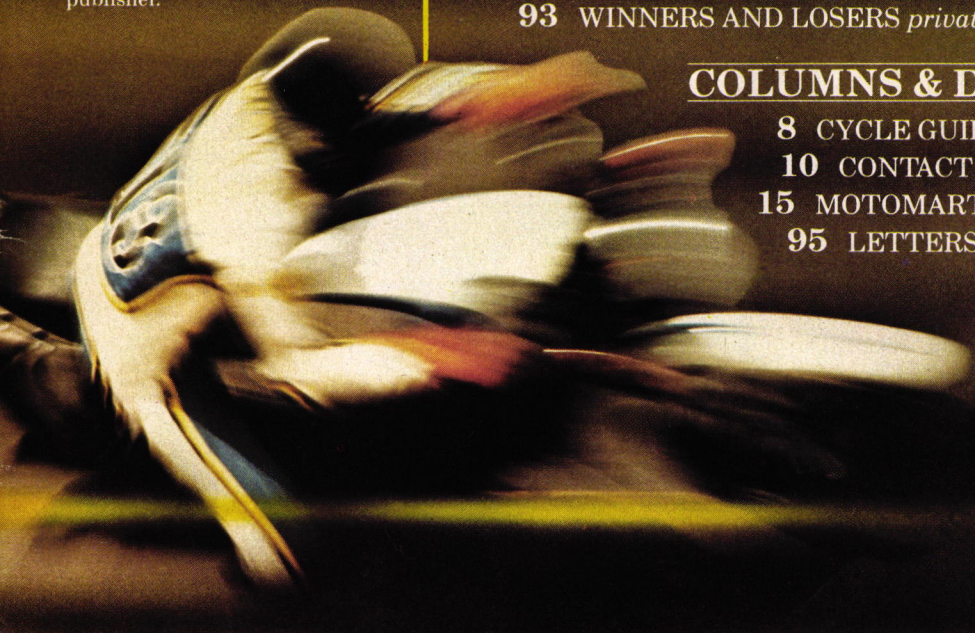
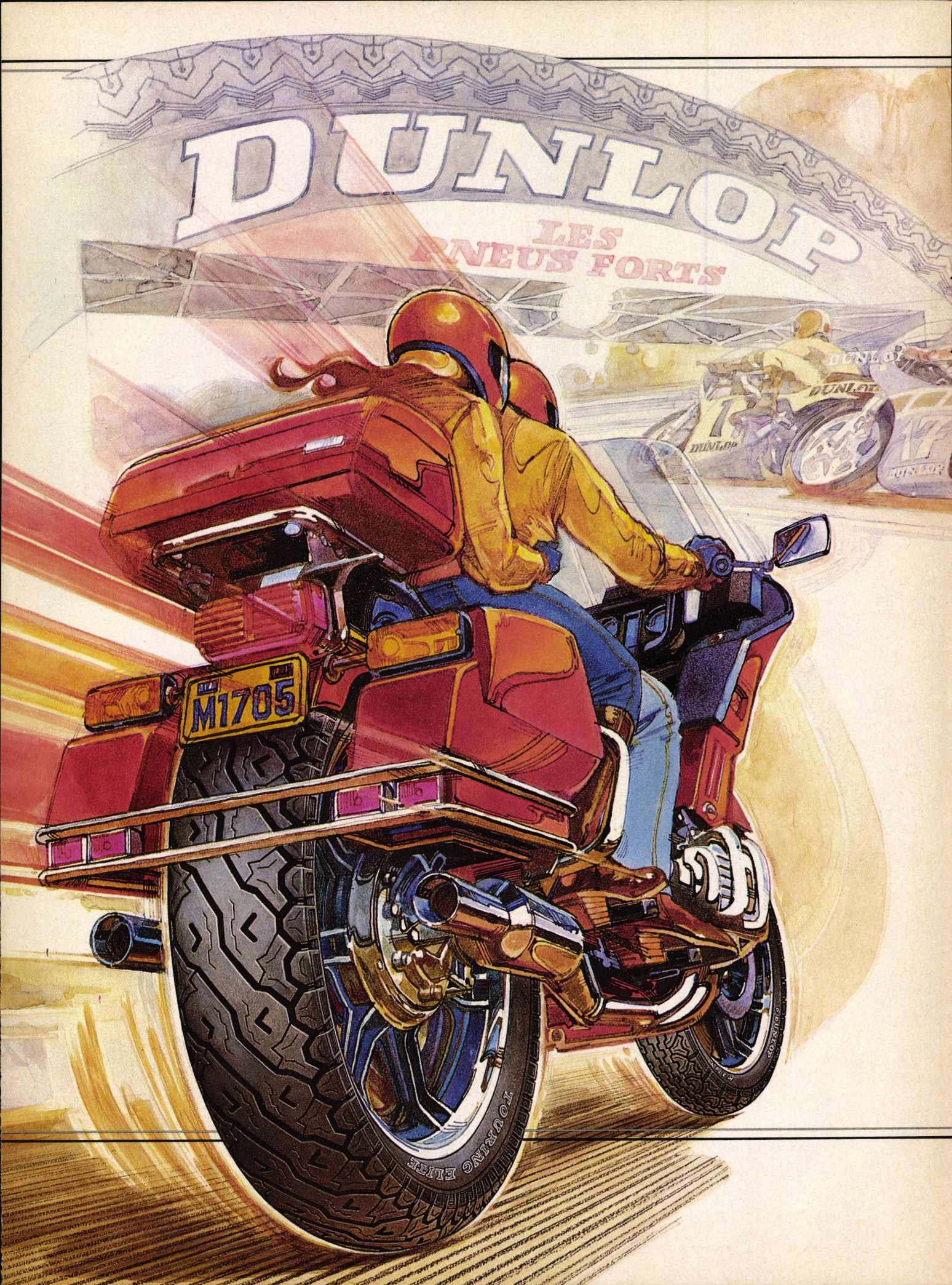


ON THE COVER:
Travel with us now to the wilds of California's San Gabriel mountains where we'll stalk Yamaha's FZ750 in its natural habitat: the serpentine blacktop. David Dewhurst clicked the shutter as his assistant, Charles Everitt, wrestled the newborn 750-class sportbike into the pen for tagging and a full road test.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CYCLE GUIDE(USPS 535-210) is published monthly except during November by Cycle Guide Publications, Inc., 20916 Higgins Court, Torrance, California 90501. Second Class Postage paid at Torrance, California and at additional mailing offices.

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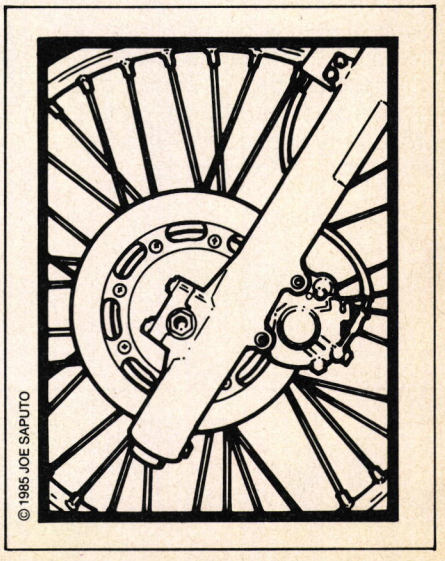

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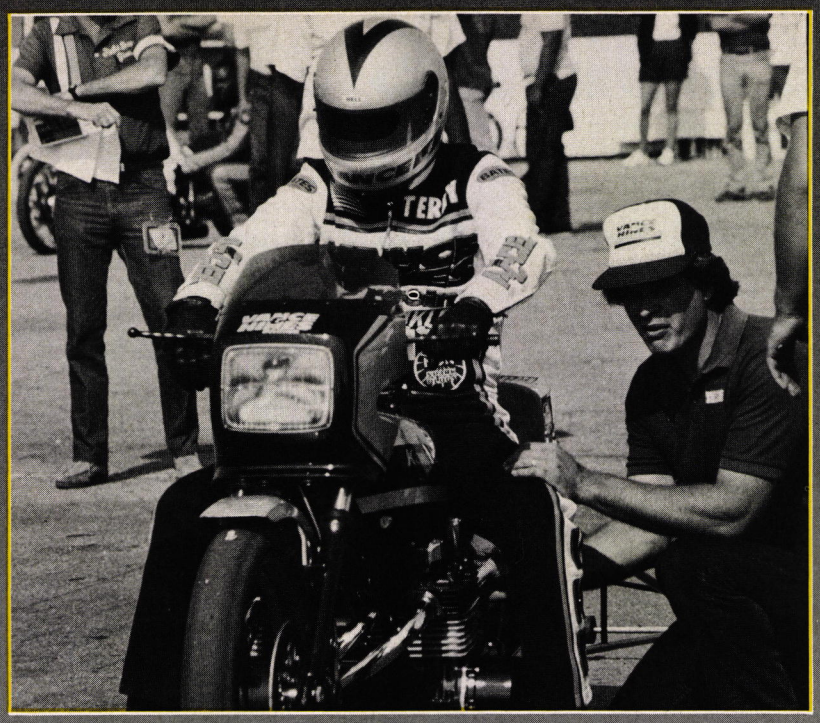

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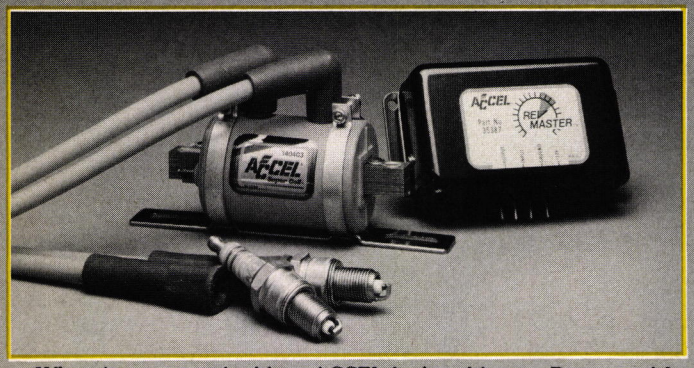
Terry Vance - 12 time National Champion, current NMRA and IDBA Pro Stock National Record Holder.
Byron Hines - IBDA Mechanic of the Year 1981/82.



When it comes to ignition, ACCEL is the ultimate. Byron and I rely on the quality, dependability and power that only ACCEL components can provide. Our confidence comes from the fact that ACCEL is no fly-by-night operation. They're part of a billion dollar company whose primary business is building quality ignition parts. So when we asked them for a super high output motorcycle coil and a rev limiter that *really* works, we *expected* something good, but we didn't expect anything as good as what we got:

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Byron installed a pair of these things on my Pro-Stocker for an "Acid test", and we frankly couldn't believe the difference (these are *street* coils remember). They lit off my 16 to 1 compression, 200 HP motor instantly and gave better responsiveness than any coil we've ever tried. Byron now uses these Super Coils on his "street bike" (it's nearly as quick as my Pro Stocker so hang on to your wallet if you're a gambler) and we sell 'em by the hundreds to the top street and race guys all over the country. These coils, with the incredible 9mm yellow wires *will* make a difference. Ask Byron, he'll tell ya.

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Byron always teases me about "revvin' it till the valves float and then shiftin' " but I'll tell you there's no worse feeling than missing a shift and hearing very expensive noises between your knees. You'll not win a #1 plate doing that.

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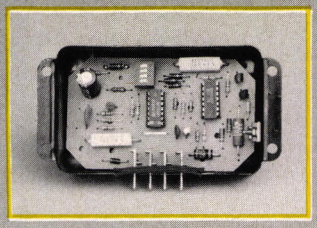

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Terry Vance

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OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Cagiva WRX 250-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.1/11.6	232	30.0/4.65	6
Cagiva WMX 250-'84	January '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.7	221	28.0/4.65	6
Can-Am 320 Trials-'84	October '84	Trials	Two-stroke	4.8/4.5	205	25.5/3.00	6
Honda ATC250R-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.8/8.0	311	N/A	5
Honda CR125R-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.3	195	27.2/4.29	6
Honda CR250R-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	216	26.7/4.13	5
Honda CR500R-'85	February '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	232	27.5/4.41	5
Honda XR200R-'84	August '84	Enduro	Four-stroke	9.9/9.6	235	26.0/4.13	6
Honda XR350R-'83	June '83	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.9/10.4	253	26.0/3.94	6
Honda XR500R-'83	October '83	Desert	Four-stroke	11.0/12.2	278	25.5/3.94	5
Husqvarna 250CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.51	6
Husqvarna 400WR-'84	July '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.0/11.2	242	28.5/5.16	6
Husqvarna 500CR-'85	April '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.9	235	27.0/4.72	4
Husqvarna 510TE-'85	March '85	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.6/11.9	263	28.5/5.16	6
Kawasaki KXT250 Tecate-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.6/8.2	319	N/A	5
Kawasaki KDX200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.9	214	28.0/4.76	6
Kawasaki KDX250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	232	29.0/5.00	6
Kawasaki KX125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	195	27.5/4.57	6
Kawasaki KX250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	220	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KX500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/11.9	232	29.0/4.80	5
Kawasaki KLR600-'84	September '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.2/8.3	322	29.5/4.80	5
KTM MC 495-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.4	249	28.0/4.21	4
Maico 490 Spider-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.2	240	27.0/4.72	4
M-Star 250 Supercross-'84	Nov./Dec. '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.7	230	27.0/4.72	5
Suzuki ALT50-'83	June '83	ATV	Two-stroke	N/A	90	N/A	1
Suzuki Quadracer 250-'85	May '85	ATV	Two-stroke	7.2/8.1	326	N/A	5
Suzuki Quadrunner 250-'84	October '84	ATV	Four-stroke	1.0/N/A	384	N/A	5
Suzuki RM125-'85	May '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.4/11.8	202	29.0/4.84	6
Suzuki RM250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.9	220	27.8/4.41	5
Yamaha BW200-'85	April '85	Trail	Four-stroke	6.3/6.6	249	27.3/3.46	5
Yamaha IT200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.6	211	28.0/4.53	6
Yamaha XT250-'84	Nov./Dec. '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.7/7.9	266	28.3/4.60	6
Yamaha YZ125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.3	194	27.7/4.57	6
Yamaha YZ250-'85	June '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.3	219	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.7	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R100RS-'84	October '84	2C/G	979.9	13.425/95.84	111	506	45–57	163
BMW K100RS-'84	October '84	4I/G	987.2	12.381/109.48	133	532	39–54	139
H-D FXRS Low Glide-'84	January '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.917/94.57	112	575	38–48	140
H-D FXRT Sport Glide-'85	October '84	45 deg. 2D/H	1337.7	14.180/90.36	92	640	28–51	126
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.603/88.75	107	774	39–54	152
H-D XLH Sportster-'85	February '85	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.742/95.94	111	490	43–58	146
Honda Gold Wing Ltd Ed.-'85	March '85	4C/G	1181.9	13.346/98.36	113	810	37–45	134
Honda Nighthawk S-'84	February '84	4A/G	696.7	12.048/109.75	125	492	28–45	125
Honda NS250R-'85	May '85	90 deg. 2D/F††	249.3	13.091/101.58	121	339	27–38	135
Honda VF500F Interceptor-'84	July '84	90 deg. 4D/F	497.6	12.484/106.00	126	419	33–48	123
Honda VF700F Interceptor-'84	October '84	90 deg. 4D/F	698.9	12.323/106.50	124	512	37–48	136
Honda VF750F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.890/114.64	140	511	23–39	127
Honda VF1000F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	998.4	11.121/123.45	150	536	23–45	125
Honda VF700S Sabre-'85	January '85	90 deg. 4D/G	698.9	12.358/109.09	121	514	28–48	136
Honda VT1100C Shadow-'85	June '85	45 deg. 2D/G	1099.2	13.022/100.33	112	560	33–44	127
Honda V65 Magna-'85	February '85	90 deg. 4D/G	1098.0	11.440/118.42	142	566	34–46	133
Kawasaki Ninja 600R-'85	March '85	4A/F	592.6	12.124/109.09	135	448	40–48	135
Kawasaki GPz550-'85	March '85	4A/F	553.8	12.478/104.89	121	432	44–54	137
Kawasaki GPz750-'84	May '84	4A/F	739.0	12.114/110.97	135	502	37–47	120
Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo-'83	July '83	4A/F	739.0	11.225/123.53	146	514	N/A	N/A
Kawasaki GPz1100-'84	May '84	4A/F	1089.9	11.312/120.80	145	560	24–48	120
Kawasaki Eliminator-'85	April '85	4A/G	908.2	11.405/117.49	134	569	22–41	131
Kawasaki Ninja-'84	May '84	4A/F	908.2	11.181/123.62	146	523	24–44	126
Kawasaki Voyager-'84	March '84	6A/G	1286.1	13.346/97.61	116	882	28–44	142
Laverda RGS 1000-'84	December '83	3A/F	980.8	12.565/106.50	130	556	25–40	140
Suzuki GS550ES-'85	May '85	4A/F	572.3	12.551/106.50	119	447	33–48	133
Suzuki GS700E-'85	January '85	4A/F	699.5	11.978/112.21	125	485	27–53	140
Suzuki GS1150E-'85	June '85	4A/F	1135.4	11.032/121.78	138	529	30–55	138
Suzuki GS1150ES-'84	October '84	4A/F	1135.4	11.268/122.44	148	542	26–51	122
Suzuki GV700GL Madura-'85	Nov./Dec. '84	82 deg. 4D/G	698.5	13.307/102.15	111	546	23–45	143
Suzuki GV1200GL Madura-'85	February '85	82 deg. 4D/G	1165.9	11.364/117.18	140	576	28–45	131
Yamaha FJ600-'84	July '84	4A/F	598.8	12.468/105.63	126	435	32–50	129
Yamaha FJ1100-'85	April '85	4A/F	1097.6	11.002/123.28	145	543	30–47	138
Yamaha FZ750-'85	June '85	45 deg. 4A/F	749.6	11.317/118.57	140	485	31–50	129
Yamaha RZ350-'84	July '84	2A/F††	347.4	13.529/97.61	111	357	26–53	122
Yamaha RZ500-'84	September '84	4D/F††	499.7	12.053/112.64	136	439	25–37	N/A
Yamaha Maxim X-'85	May '85	4A/G	697.3	11.779/113.63	121	505	25–47	135
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	March '84	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	12.759/101.46	124	752	37–53	137
Yamaha Vmax-'85	May '85	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	10.922/127.47	144	596	23–32	137

*A-Transverse, B-Vertical (single-cylinder only), C-Horizontally Opposed, D-Tandem Vee, E-Transverse Vee, F-Chain Final Drive, G-Shaft Final Drive, H-Belt Final Drive, I-Horizontal Longitudinal; † indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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The Wilderness Connection

The desert is a state of mind.

• From the highway, the desert looks like little more than miles and miles of . . . miles and miles. Featureless, forbidding, uniformly carpeted with tumbleweed and chaparral, punctuated only by barren mountain ranges in the distance. A place, for most of us, to pass through on our way to somewhere else.

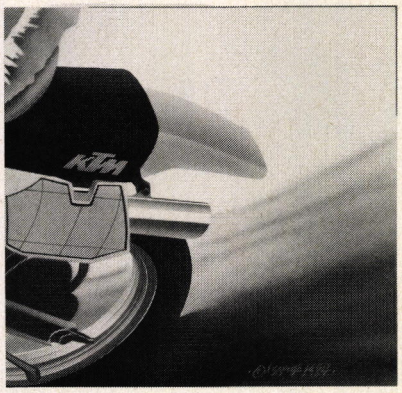
But depart from the pavement, with the off-road vehicle of your choice, and the desert changes completely. And keeps changing. What seemed from afar to be nothing more than a vast emptiness, becomes a mosaic of fantastic variety. That is, a landscape where the hard edges of geologic reality seem to pry open the rusty hinges of your imagination. A natural fantasy land.

For me, those revelations are fairly recent arrivals. I had long held the average Midwesterner's skeptical apprehension about the desert. After all, who needs all that desolation? Hell, motorcycles don't even *like* sand. Sand belongs at the beach, under bare feet, without snakes, scorpions, sharp rocks, cactuses, monster whoops and abandoned mineshafts. Sand requires proximity to extra-large bodies of water, and small, medium and large girls in swimsuits.

So when my old pal, B. F. Diehl, said "Let's go to the desert," I said OK, for two reasons: I had never raced out there before, and he had. New adventures of dangerous portent should be undertaken only with a qualified guide. I have this nightmare, see. My mountain climbing instructor and I are clinging to a high precipice. I ask where he learned his stuff, and he says "Kansas."

Diehl, however, is an old desert rat with the right credentials. He was out there at the beginning, in the '50s, when the true hot setup was a Matchless Single, followed by the BSA and Triumph Twins. He was also a part of the '60s, with the populist wave of Yamaha DT-1s, and the '70s, too, for the advent of Pentons, and interest from Honda. In other words, Diehl has been known to go fast in the desert; he was even the winner of the 1974 Greenhorn Enduro—for two weeks. Following the first protest, Honda rider Jay Tullis was the posted victor, then Bob Steffan had won. Finally it went to Nate Sciaqua.

Diehl's old club, the Chaparrals, has long been a mainstay in the SoCal desert racing scene. His plan was to help out



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with the event and, with luck, fit me into an open slot on the starting line. I was hoping to hook up with an A-rider and get some hands-on training in desert survival tactics.

"Sure," said club president Bill Adams, "we can fit you in somehow." Minutes later he was back. "Got'cha a good minute," he said. "Number One."

"Gee, thanks, Bill," I muttered, nearly speechless with dread. The thought of fronting a host of desert veterans was suddenly more than enough of a good thing. "Only one other rider on the first minute," said Bill.

"Probably an A-rider, huh?" I inquired hopefully. "Nah," he said, "just some guy who doesn't know what he's doing." This I took to be Bill's wry sense of humor, until I saw the entry list. My riding partner was listed as Class C, Super Senior. Which turned out to be academic, because he didn't even show up. Probably found out he had to go first.

Not that Bill Adams doesn't have a sense of humor. "Cactus Willie" has been riding the desert for more than 30 years. His first event, the Cactus Derby in 1952, started at midnight. "My friends though I was bitin' off more than I could chew," he recalled. And the reason they thought that was because Bill has no left hand. He'd lost it in a shotgun accident when he was 15, and learned to ride without it. His clutch lever is mounted downside-up, so he can push it with his forearm. And he has ridden the Greenhorn, a 500-miler, more than once. A guy like that has to have a measure of wit.

So, having unwittingly wheedled my way to the front of my first desert race, I just had to grin and gas it. Which worked well enough, as it turned out. I stayed more or less on the clock, save for losing the trail a half-dozen times, and a few dust-ups when the bike tried to bury me head-first in the sand. The desert weaves a high-speed hypnotic spell, which can last for miles before you snap out of it enough to recall the last sighting of a course marker.

And what the desert might lack in moisture and maple trees, it more than repays in surprises and shrubbery. When the two combine at the same time and place, of course, unfortunate results are possible; thus the familiar designation, puckerbushes. But true respect is reserved for the cholla cactus, a spiny sculpture bristling with thousands of needles. The cholla seems to glow with its own internal light, as if to say, "Here I am. See me? I've been here a spell, and I'm staying. Hit me, sucker, and I'll stick you *good*." If you're prone to target fixation, the cholla will put a kink in your sphincter every time.

What dominates the desert, though, even more than the cactus, is the sky above. In fact, the desert has more sky than most any other one place. And it's that expanse which provides the rider with one of the essential components of speed—the ability to see where he's going. Arcing through a broad sandwash, as yet unwhooped, feet up, half-lock at about 75 mph, trailing a steady 3-foot roost and the crisp blat of a big four-stroke single. . . . Oh, my yes.

I suppose that in a race car, tracing the turn into the Mulsanne Straight at Le Mans at 150 mph, the feeling is similar. But I'll bet it's not nearly as much fun. And for proof, here's a story: The crew at Diehl's check heard the sound of an approaching bike, rising and falling, out of sight in the foothills. With each fade of the exhaust note, they could hear giggles. Then they heard the engine again, then a belly laugh. Shortly afterward, a female rider rolled over the rise and into the check, chortling. "Never had so much fun in my life," she hollered, whopping Diehl on the shoulder. "This is just bitchin'!" And off she went into the desert, chuckling away.

The dictionary describes the desert as "a dry, barren, sandy region, naturally incapable of supporting almost any plant or animal life."

Almost.

—*T.J. Rafferty*

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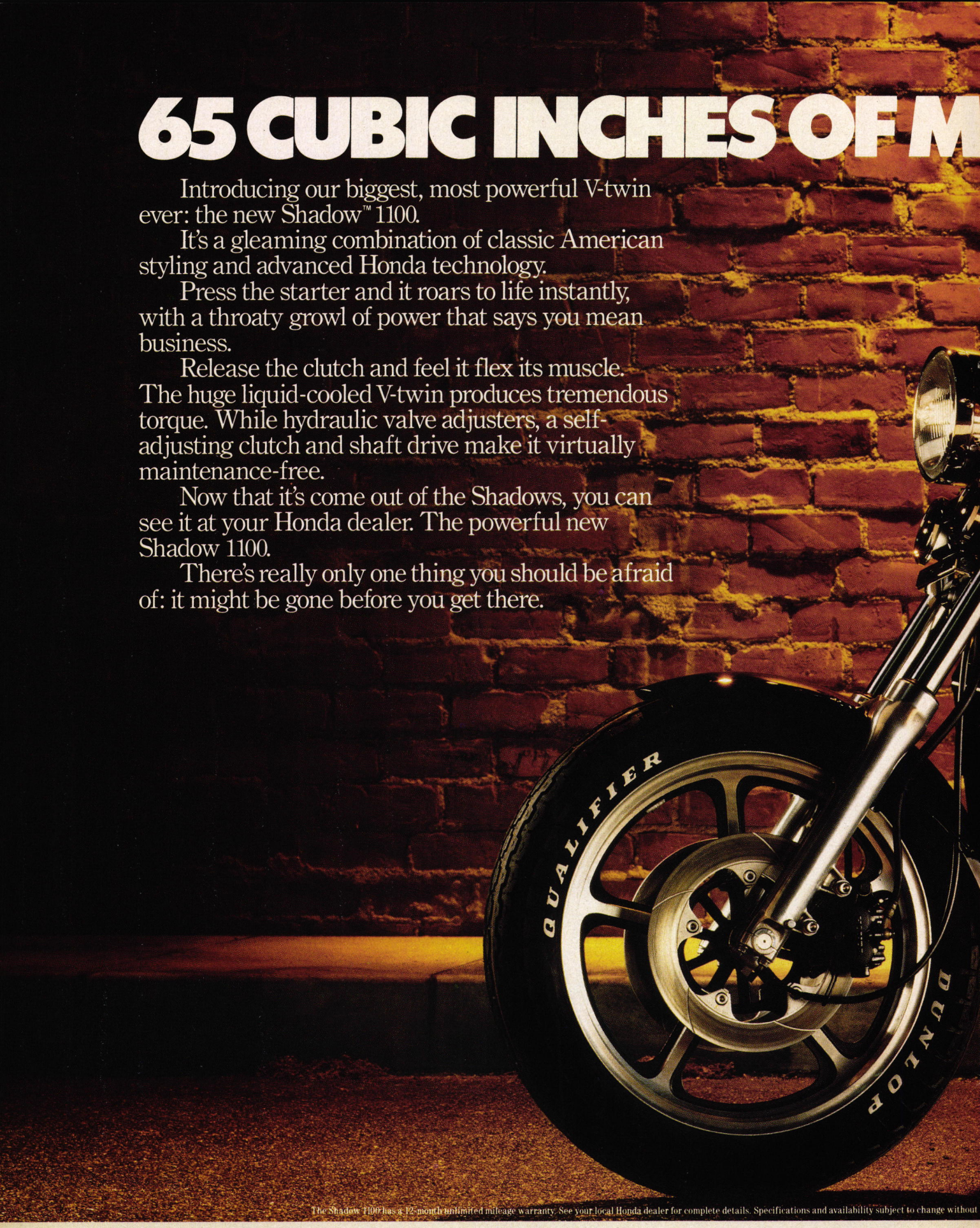

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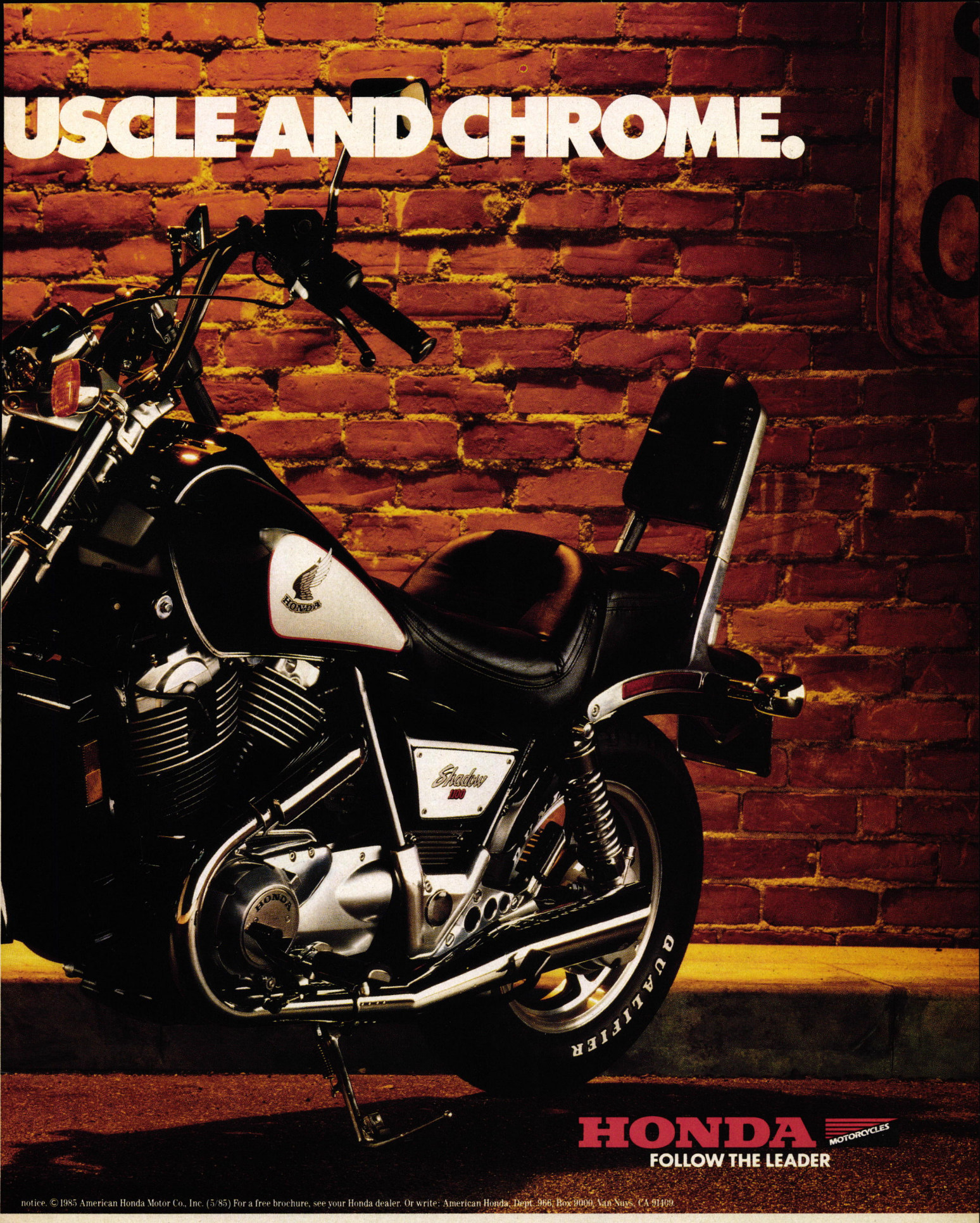

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and obey the basic speed law. Slow down before you enter a turn. Give yourself plenty of room when passing cars. Don't make any unsafe modifications. If you're riding a new or unfamiliar machine, take it extra easy. And be nice enough to acknowledge when you are given the right-of-way. Pros know that doing the right things makes riding a lot safer. And more fun.

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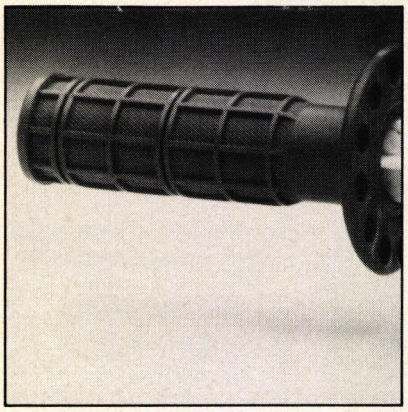
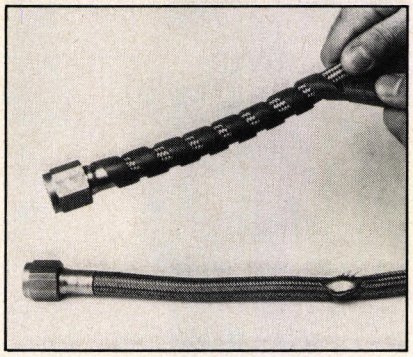
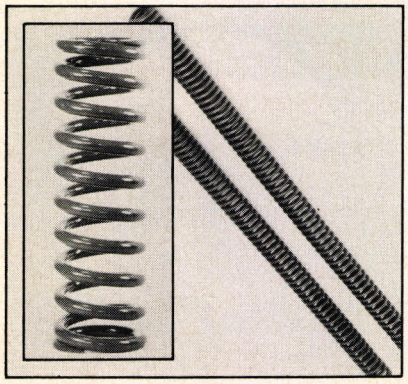


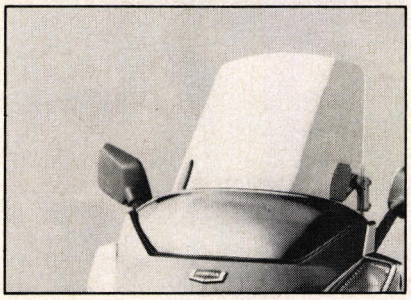


No more cable rash: M. M. Newman Corp. is offering Heli-Tube Anti-Chafe Guard plastic wrap for protecting cables and hoses. The spirally cut wrap is available in polyethylene, nylon or Teflon and applies like common tape. M. M. Newman claims the guard will protect hoses or bundles up to 6 inches in diameter and can withstand temperatures from −100 degrees F to 450 degrees F. Widths range from ⅛ inch to 1 inch, and prices start at 3 cents per foot. To stop irritating your cables, contact M. M. Newman, Dept. CG, 7 Hawkes St., Marblehead, Massachusetts 01945.

Works luggage: Once the exclusive property of racers, Arai's equipment bags are now available to the public. The dark-blue bags come in two sizes: one to hold a single full-face helmet, and a larger version for carrying headgear for two. And because even racers don't like arm and neck strain, the larger bag is equipped with casters. Retail prices are $59.95 for the small bag and $131.95 for the large one. Get yours from Arai helmet dealers or directly from Arai Helmet Ltd., Ampersand International, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 421, Tenafly, New Jersey 07670.

Magnum F.J.: Progressive Suspension doesn't claim its progressively wound Magnum springs will turn you into Tom Selleck. But it does claim the springs will improve your Yamaha FJ1100's ride, and make it better for sport riding, too. PS also offers progressively wound Magnum fork springs, and warrants them—and the shock springs—for life against sag or breakage. Retail prices are $49.95 for the fork springs, $59.95 for the shock spring. For more information, contact Progressive Suspension, Dept. CG, 15665 Unit N, Huntington Beach, California 90808.





Shield Elite: National Cycle's N2602 windshield isn't for everyone; in fact, it's only for owners of Honda's Elite scooters. The ⅛-inch-thick clear Lexan windscreen utilizes National Cycle's double Ballsocket mounting system, which provides impact release for added safety, the manufacturer claims. Also included in the $79.95 retail price is N.C.'s Rake Adjust system, which allows changing the windshield's height and angle. You don't have to be one of society's upper crust to get an N2602 shield, though; simply send Jenkins to a motorcycle dealer or have him write National Cycle, Dept. CG, 2200 Maywood Drive, Maywood, Illinois 60153.

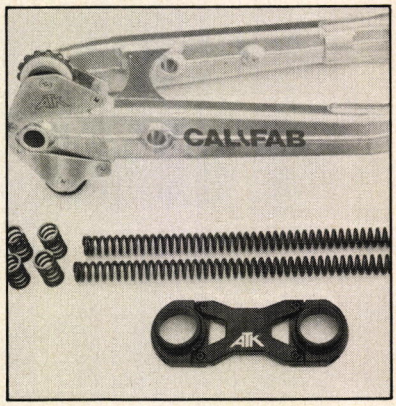
High-Pitched Touring: Here's one way to make your '84/'85 Honda Aspencade or Interstate louder—at least visually: Drag Specialties Screaming Eagle Emblem. Made of solid brass, the emblem is curved to match the windshield trim on those Hondas, mounts with an adhesive backing and requires removal of the stock Honda logo. The emblem's eagle has a 7-inch wingspan, and a suggested retail price of $12.95 from Drag Specialties dealers.

Motomart

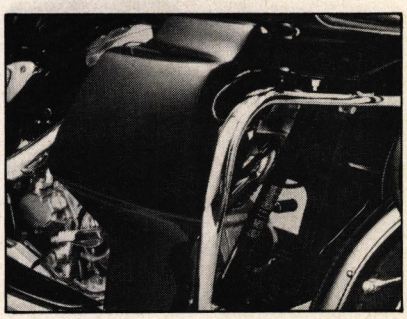
Just a little off the top: Here's one trim you won't need to see your barber about—the Trim Road Race/Sport Boot. The 14-inch-high leather boot features full-length shin padding and wrap-around ankle padding. You can get Trims in black, black/red, black/blue, black/silver and red/black color combinations, in sizes 6-12, for a suggested retail price of $134.95. Optional hard-rubber shin protectors are available for $14.95 and fit in a front pocket of the boot. Both are available from motorcycle dealers or directly from Van Leeuwen Enterprises, Dept. CG, 13275 Paxton Ave., Areleta, California 91331.

Your helmet, sir?: Milestone Motor Co.'s Helmet Valet won't clean your visor for you, but it will help keep most of your riding gear in one place. The rigid-foam helmet holder/jacket hanger features beveled corners and a 9-inch-by-15-inch mounting base. MMC claims the helmet won't fall out of its holder, even in a moving RV or trailer, and will hold either open- or full-face helmets. The Helmet Valet is painted gloss white and retails for $31.95 from Milestone Motor Co., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 28313, Tempe, Arizona 85282.

Handle Your RZ: Or let Cal-Fab and ATK do it for you with this Handling Kit designed for Yamaha's RZ350. Cal-Fab provides the heli-arc-welded 6061 aluminum swingarm, equipped with a new-design A-Trak torque elimination device. Also included are ATK's multi-rate fork springs and fork brace. Suggested retail price for the kit is $399.95, and more information is available by contacting ATK Leitner Corp., Dept. CG, 2650-C Walnut Ave., Tustin, California, 92680.



Dancing in the Rain: Gene Kelly could have used Rukka's boot covers in filming "Singing in the Rain," and in a torrential downpour you'll find them useful, too. The one-piece covers use the same material as the firm's rainsuits, and snap over the top of the boot, leaving the sole exposed. Rukka claims the Graphite-colored covers are easy to put on, as well; simply wrap and snap. The covers are available in sizes S-L at a suggested retail price of $19.99. For more information, dance your way to a motorcycle dealer or send a note to Rukka U.S.A. Inc., Dept. CG, 5406 Glen Alden Drive, Richmond, Virginia 23231.



Slide Glide: Assist your FXRT's aerodynamics and get some wind protection, too, with Harley-Davidson's Fairing Lowers. The ABS plastic lowers are designed to mount to any Sport Glide—with or without the stock H-D engine guard—and Harley claims the lowers direct cool air over the engine. The lowers come color-matched to FXRT's in Candy Red, Candy Burgundy, Claret Red or Candy Root Beer for $172.50; or in Vivid Black for $159.95. They're available at Harley-Davidson dealers, and for more information write Harley-Davidson Motor Co. Ltd., Dept. CG, 3700 West Juneau Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201.

Hey, Eddie signed mine: Now you don't have to mob Eddie Lawson for his autograph, because Bell Helmets offers the Lawson-signature Tourstar. This Tourstar comes in Yamaha red-white-and-blue team colors and features a 0.080-inch polycarbonate faceshield, Bell's Kam-Lok detent mechanism and adjustable cheek pads. Retail price for the Snell '85-approved helmet is $184.95 and it comes in sizes ranging from 6 ¾ to 7 ¾ in ⅛-size increments. Get yours at a motorcycle dealer or directly from Bell Helmets Inc, Dept. CG, 15301 Shoemaker Ave., Norwalk, California 90650.

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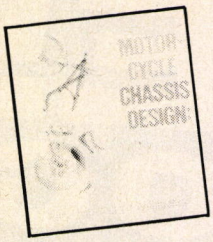

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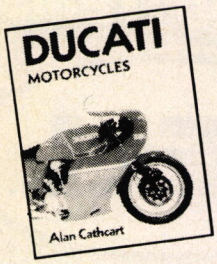

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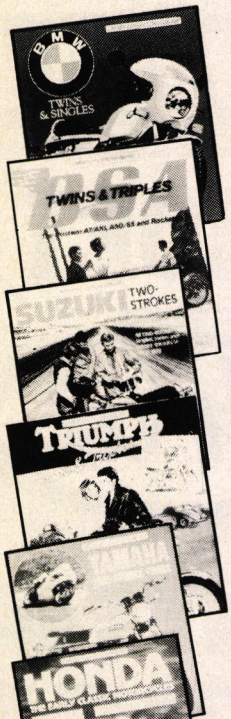

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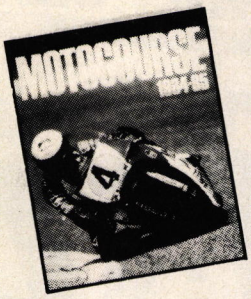

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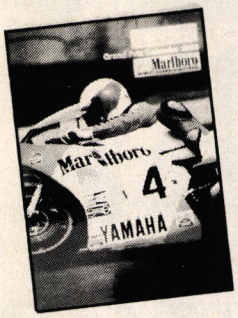

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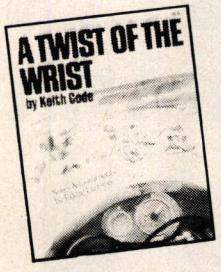

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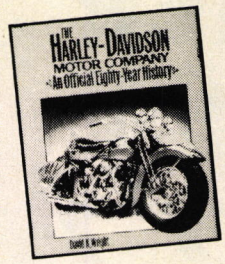

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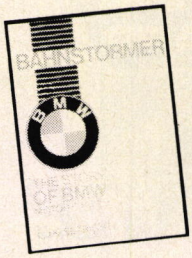

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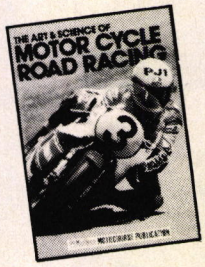

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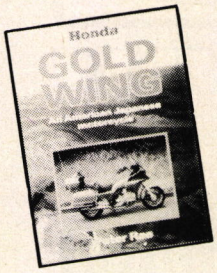

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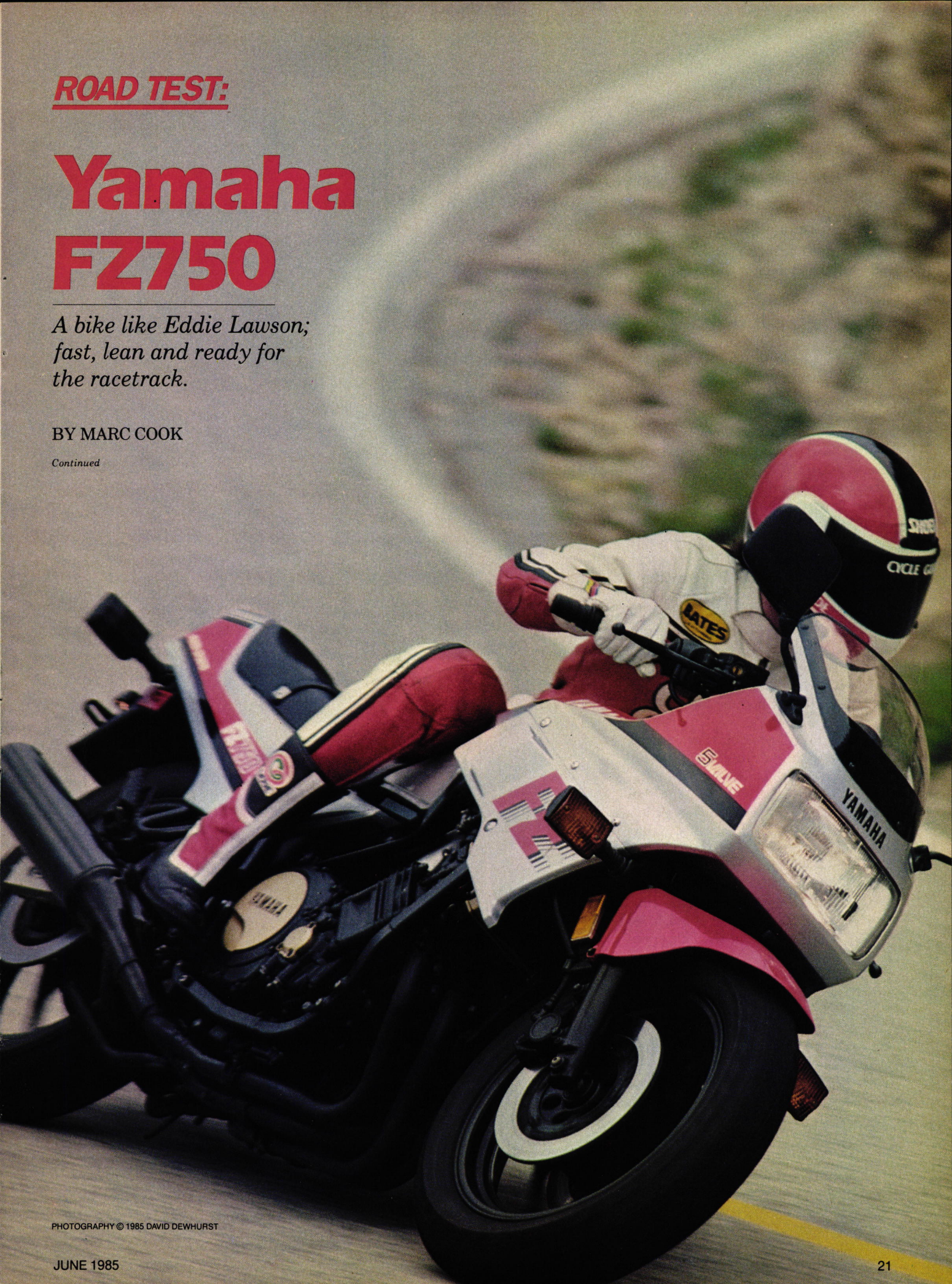
ROAD TEST:

Yamaha FZ750

A bike like Eddie Lawson; fast, lean and ready for the racetrack.

BY MARC COOK

Continued



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 DAVID DEWHURST

Yamaha is back in the business of building sportbikes, and to Americans, that renewed interest in sporting machinery seems long overdue. For years, hard-core canyon crazies saw only sport-touring Secas and the occasional contraband two-stroke screamer from the same company that created the legendary RD/RZ family. Then 1984 blew in and Yamaha delivered a one-two-three punch with the RZ350, FJ600 and FJ1100. Yet Yamaha still seemed to ignore the 750 class. In fact, except for the shaft-drive 750 Seca, Yamaha has *never* imported a hard-core 750 sportbike.

That's all changed now, with the coming of Yamaha's FZ750. Even the most fleeting glance will tell you this motorcycle means business, and intends to make up for lost time. By comparison, Yamaha's FJ1100, the liter-class sportbike champ, looks almost mundane and loosely focused. But the FZ represents more than Yamaha's renewed commitment to building sportbikes; it's also a showcase for fresh thinking in design. With the FZ750, Yamaha attempted to build an almost organic motorcycle, conceived as a whole, with each aspect of the bike meshing closely, rather than assembling a collection of separate pieces. The result of that thinking is the motorcycle you see here: a deadly serious sportbike that promises nothing less than all-out performance.

The FZ makes good on that promise, too, first with startling acceleration. Yamaha elected to build a full-size 750—not some tarriff-cheating 700—and that makes the FZ a tomcat among turkey buzzards, because the bike can yank the headlight smooth out of any 700 around. And at the the dragstrip, the Yamaha scorched through the lights in 11.317 seconds at 118.57 mph; that's more than *half a second* quicker than Honda's '84 VF750F Interceptor. But the FZ's power is good for more than a quarter-mile; run the engine past 7000 rpm, and you'll swear Yamaha has hidden a few hundred more cc's somewhere.

Such impressive performance from a 750 might lead you to believe the FZ is a peaky, snappish motorcycle. That's hardly the case, though. The bike *does* accelerate incredibly hard above 7000 rpm, yet the motor pulls in a linear, predictable manner. The engine is remarkably tractable, too, considering its high specific output, and that's largely due to the copious midrange. Usable power comes on at 3000 rpm and builds smoothly to the 11,000-rpm redline.

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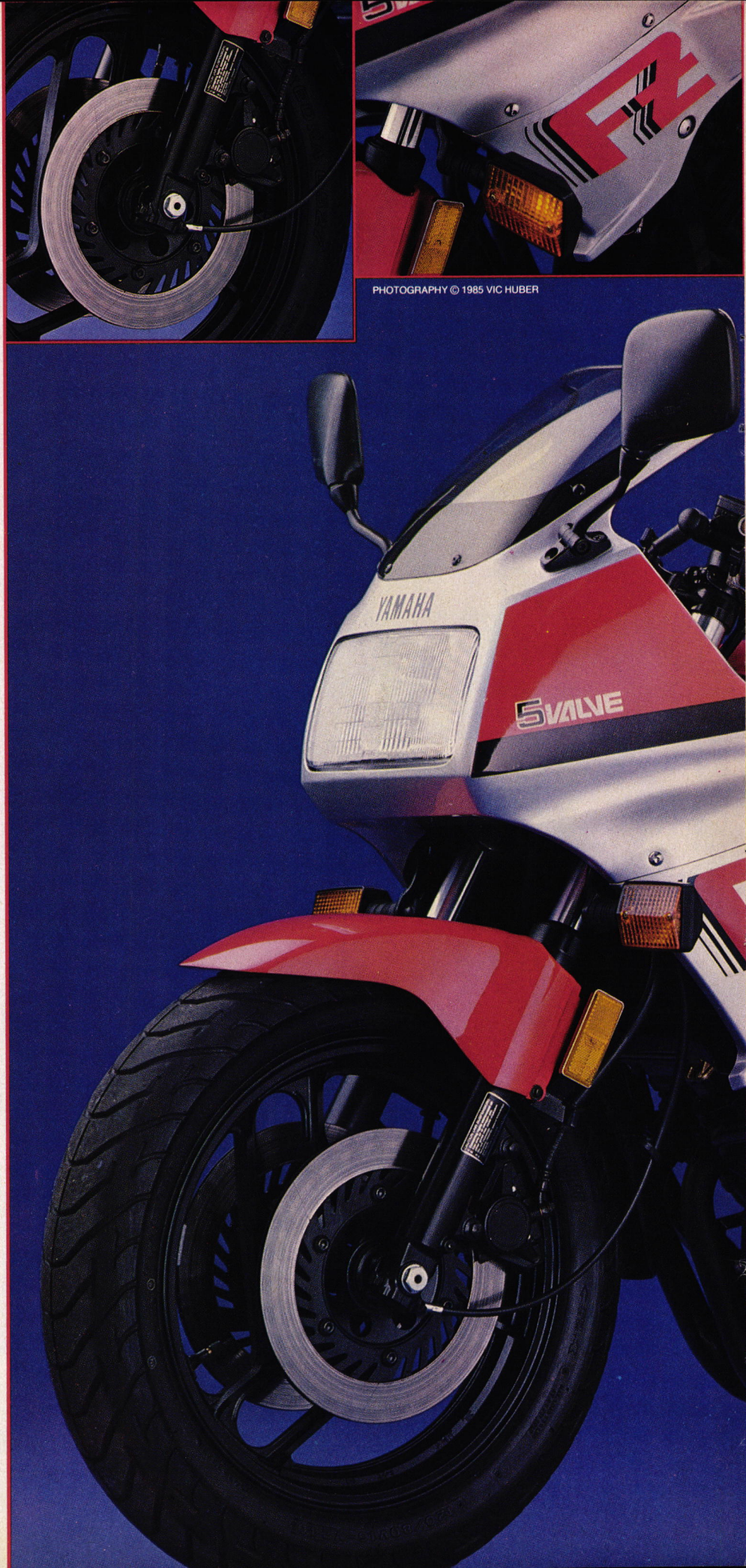

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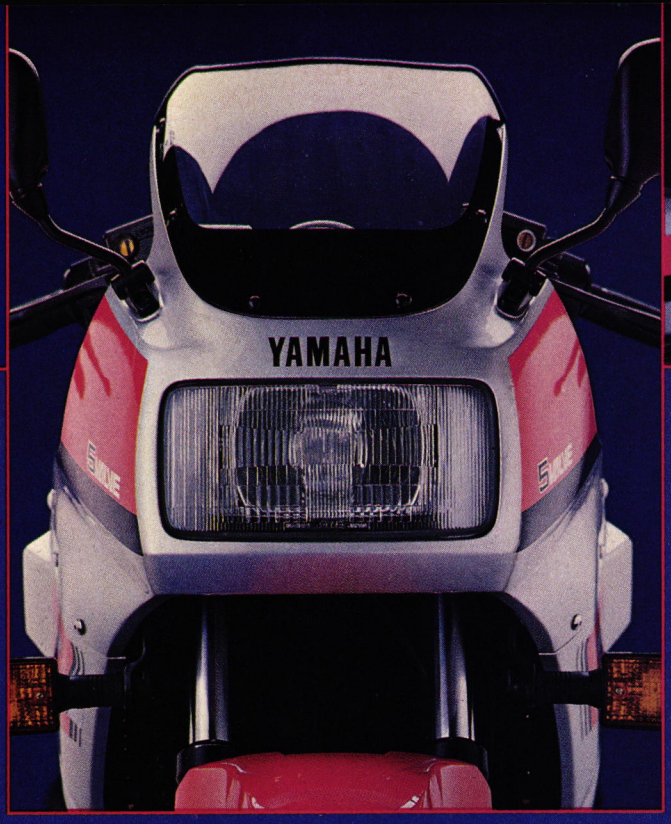
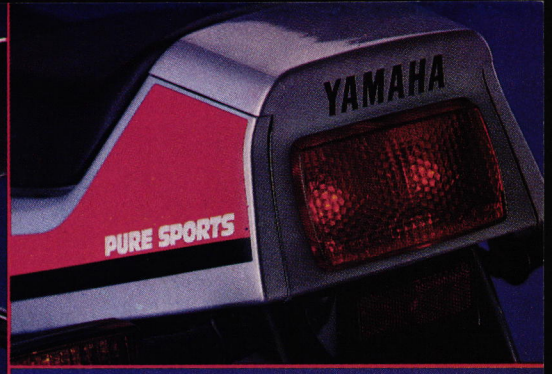
Yamaha takes motorcycling into the future with the FZ750. Designed from the start as a full-tilt sportbike, Yamaha's FZ makes few compromises and takes no prisoners.





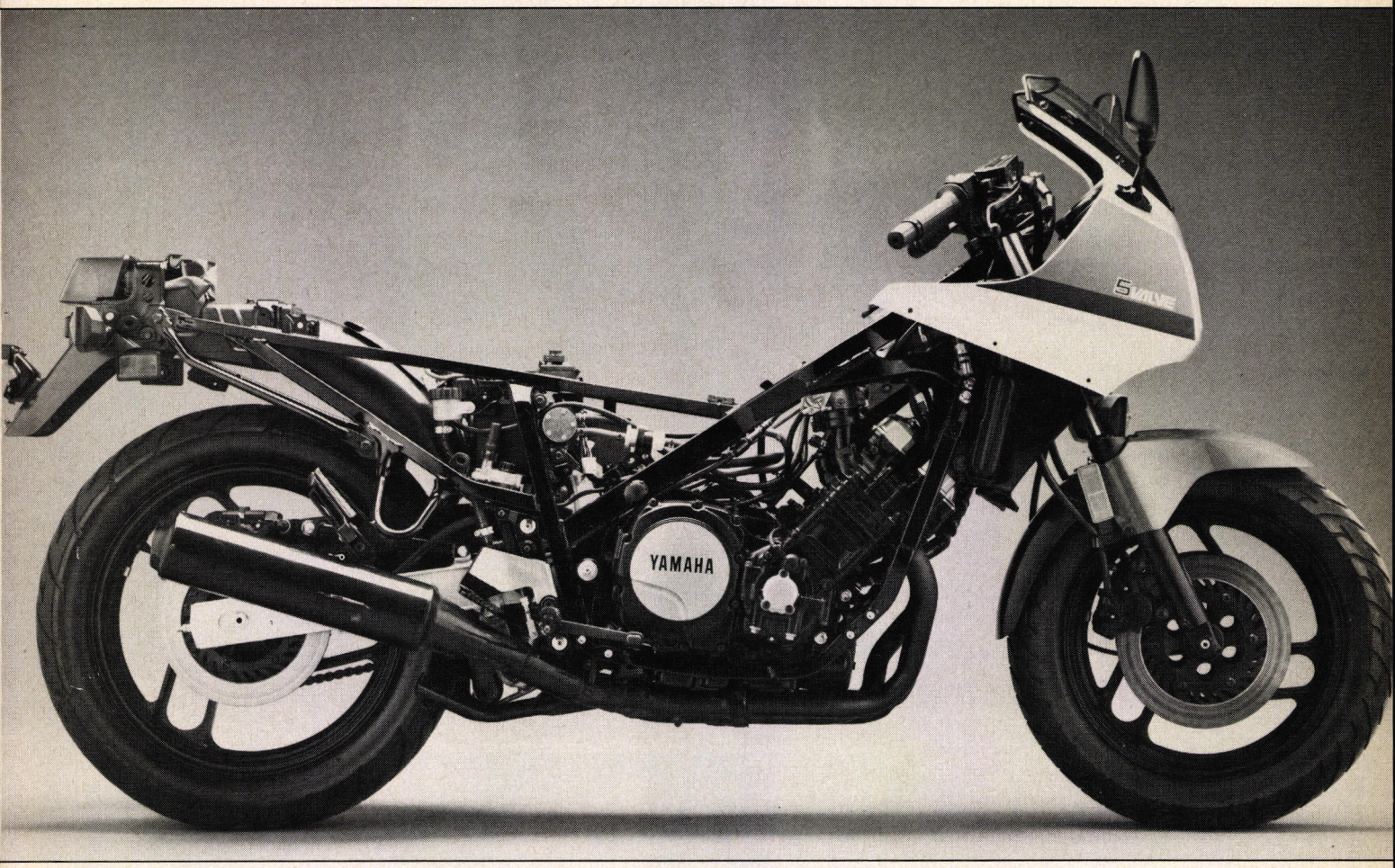
In the FZ, that impressive spread of power comes from an engine no less spectacular in specification. Yamaha cleaned off the drawing boards before starting on the 750's engine, and handed R&D three parameters: Design a four-stroke engine that not only could compete with a two-stroke of equal displacement, but that would complement its chassis, as well, and keep one eye firmly on the engine's racing potential. In its search, R&D tried powerplants with as many as seven valves per cylinder and a theoretical redline of 20,000 rpm, but production costs made such designs unfeasible. Ultimately, they settled on a five-valve configuration as a suitable compromise between cost and performance. And in flow capacity, a five-valve setup makes sense. Five valves offer more total valve circumference than a comparable four-valve arrangement, resulting in quicker exposure of intake area, aiding low-end and midrange power.

Judging by the FZ's phenomenal horsepower, the five-valve head proves R&D did its work well. Not only is the FZ remarkably fast, but it's equally docile, with strong midrange power that bears out Yamaha's claim that the five-valve design offers significant peak power advantages *and* a broad torque curve. In fact, the only flaw in the engine's otherwise seamless behavior is the carbs' abrupt throttle response. In town, that trait combines with an annoying amount of driveline lash to make the 750 awkward to ride at slow speeds. Moreover, the carburetion glitch also shows up in tight corners, where it's difficult to modulate the transition from power-on to power-off. You'll only notice that shortcoming at low speeds, though, and it doesn't take away from the FZ's remarkable top-end surge of power.

Besides, the five-valve head offers other advantages apart from good breathing characteristics for peak power. For example, the small (21mm intake, 23mm exhaust) valves are quite light, so that valve float sets in at a higher rpm than would be the case with a four-valve design. Combine that virtue with the Yamaha's feather-weight flywheel effect, and you've got a truly rev-happy motor. In fact, the FZ's engine gains revs like no other four-stroke around, making it easy to run the motor straight into its 11,750-rpm rev-limiter in the lower gears. In addition, those light valves can use correspondingly light springs, which means reduced seat and camshaft wear, contributing to the FZ's exceptionally long 26,600-mile valve adjustment interval. What's more, the engine's under-bucket-shim adjustment system eliminates the possibility of spitting a shim at the high rpm the FZ is capable of turning.

The FZ's system represents a departure from the FJ-series shim-on-top adjusters, and Yamaha engineers departed from standard FJ-practice in another area, by canting the FZ's cylinders 45 degrees from vertical. More important, the cylinder's inclination resulted in a number of benefits. For starters, it allowed mounting the four 34mm Mikuni downdraft carburetors so they have a ruler-straight shot at the pistons, which bolsters high-rpm performance. Also, the cylinder's tilt permitted shallow bends in the head pipes of the stainless-steel exhaust system, something that also aids high-rpm breathing. And the FZ's motor design places the engine's weight low in the frame, contributing to the bike's low center of gravity.

Those benefits also illustrate the de-

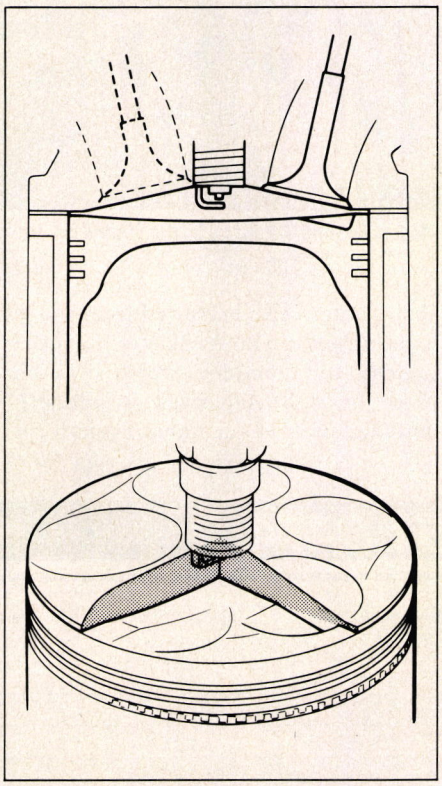


There's nothing unusual about the FZ's box-section aluminum swingarm, mild-steel frame and variable-damping fork

It's how Yamaha makes ordinary sportbike fare perform extraordinarily that sets the FZ apart from the rest.

sign philosophy Yamaha followed in creating the FZ; build the bike as a series of related subsystems—not as separate pieces. Consider: Because of the cylinder's tilt, the carburetors could be mounted high and far foward. Consequently, the airbox could be moved to a position below the front portion of the FZ's fuel tank; there, the airbox can draw in cool air, rather than the hot air that blows back off the motor in a conventional vertical inline-four. Moreover, the FZ's 6-gallon fuel tank occupies the space where a typical inline-four's carbs would be, and extends down to just above the gearbox. Not only does the tank's position place the fuel closer to the center of the bike, but it also keeps the bike's weight distribution from changing radically as gas is consumed. In short, there's nothing remarkably new about many of the pieces in Yamaha's FZ750; just in the way those pieces go together.

And one result of Yamaha's thinking is the FZ's racebike-competent handling. Yet despite having the steepest steering geometry of any modern streetbike—a 25.5 degree steering head angle and 94mm of trail—and the use of a 16-inch front wheel, the FZ doesn't turn as quickly as some other sportbikes. That's partly because the low, narrow handlebars don't offer much leverage, and force the rider to support much of his upper body weight on his wrists and hands, making the steering feel heavy. Still, that's only a consideration at relatively slow speeds, and while it adds to steering effort, it also gives the FZ a feeling of rock-solid stability.



Five valves and a shallow chamber

Six ways to rapid combustion.

Pump up the pace closer to racing speeds, though, and the Yamaha feels right at home. Then, the steering lightens considerably, permitting reasonably quick transitions, and the bike adheres tenaciously to any line you choose. And the FZ *really* responds if you're willing to expend some energy on body English. The Bridgestone tires don't intrude on such backroad antics, either; they provide outstanding grip, even when you're trimming the footpeg feelers. What's more, once set into a corner, the bike seems to discover its own letter-perfect lines, as if Eddie Lawson programmed each FZ at the factory.

You can credit the FZ's stout mild-steel frame for much of the bike's

Continued

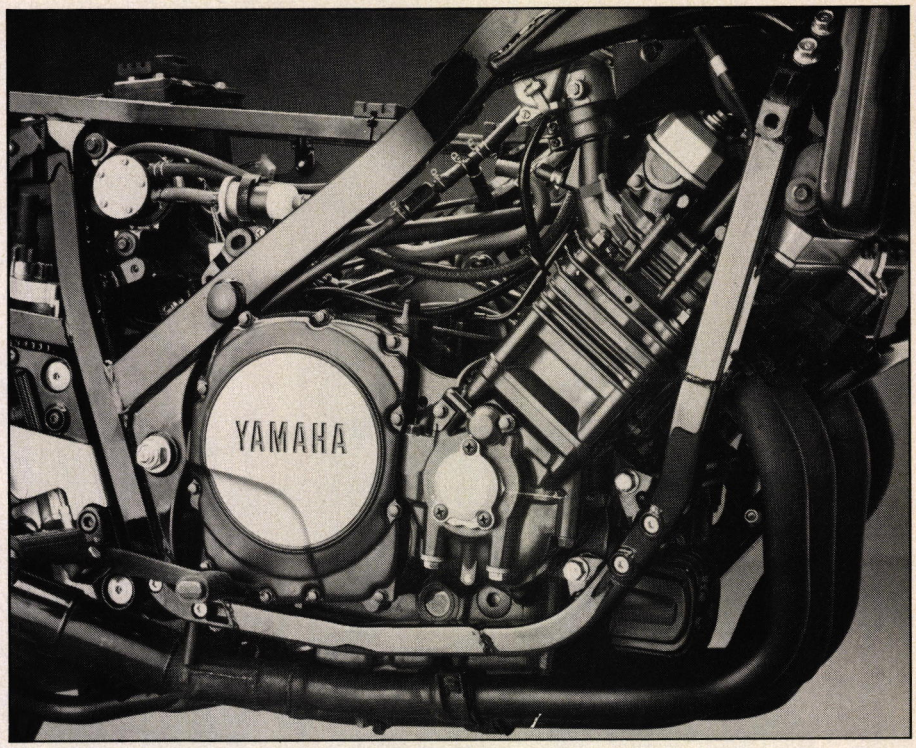
backroad behavior. The FZ uses a design similar in basic layout to that of its liter-class stablemate, the FJ1100. A pair of rectangular-section members run from the heavily gusseted steering head to the swingarm pivot, widening somewhat around the cylinder head. But Yamaha claims it abandoned the use of FJ1100-style lateral cross-bracing in front of the steering head, in order to keep that part of the FZ narrow. Even so, the styling department apparently got the last word, because the fairing is almost as wide as the FJ's.

No such compromise surrounds the FZ750's suspension, though. Up front, there's a Kayaba air-adjustable fork that utilizes a variable compression-damping circuit. A valve located below the damping rod senses the position of the fork slider and increases compression damping according to slider position. Set up for canyon work with 4 psi (Yamaha recommends a range of 0-6 psi), the fork refuses to bottom over all but the most severe bumps, yet tracks compliantly. At that pressure, the fork feels noticeably stiff, though never harsh. And unlike some other forks that feature variable compression damping, the FZ's fork works unobtrusively, providing good feel and predictable response.

Yamaha also relies on the front fork to perform an anti-dive function on the FZ. Yamaha elected not to use its hydraulically actuated anti-dive system for the 750, because, a Yamaha spokesman admitted, it doesn't work. Just the same, the FZ's fork isn't much better at the task. True, the fork doesn't slam to its stops during hard braking, but it still dives noticeably. Hard braking is something the FZ's triple disc setup is more than capable of, too. The front binder works extraordinarily well, with superb power and feel.

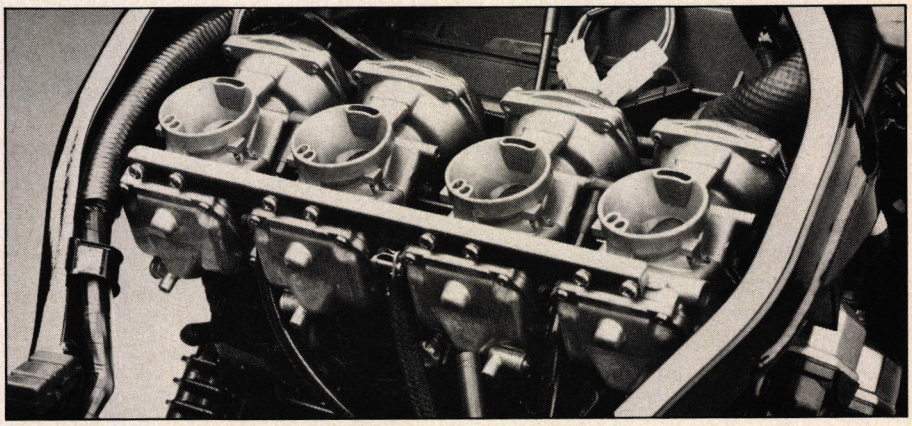
Equal praise can be placed on the FZ's rear suspension. Most of the components are a direct lift from the FJ1100, albeit with stiffer damping and spring rates. Also borrowed from the FJ is the shock's remote adjuster for spring preload and damping, which lives behind the right sidecover. It offers 17 detented preload and damping positions (numbered one to five, with quarter-turn increments), which are linked so that changing the preload alters the damping correspondingly.

For serious canyon work, the shock



Inclined engine was designed specifically for the FZ's chassis

Yamaha looks at the transverse-four from a whole new angle.

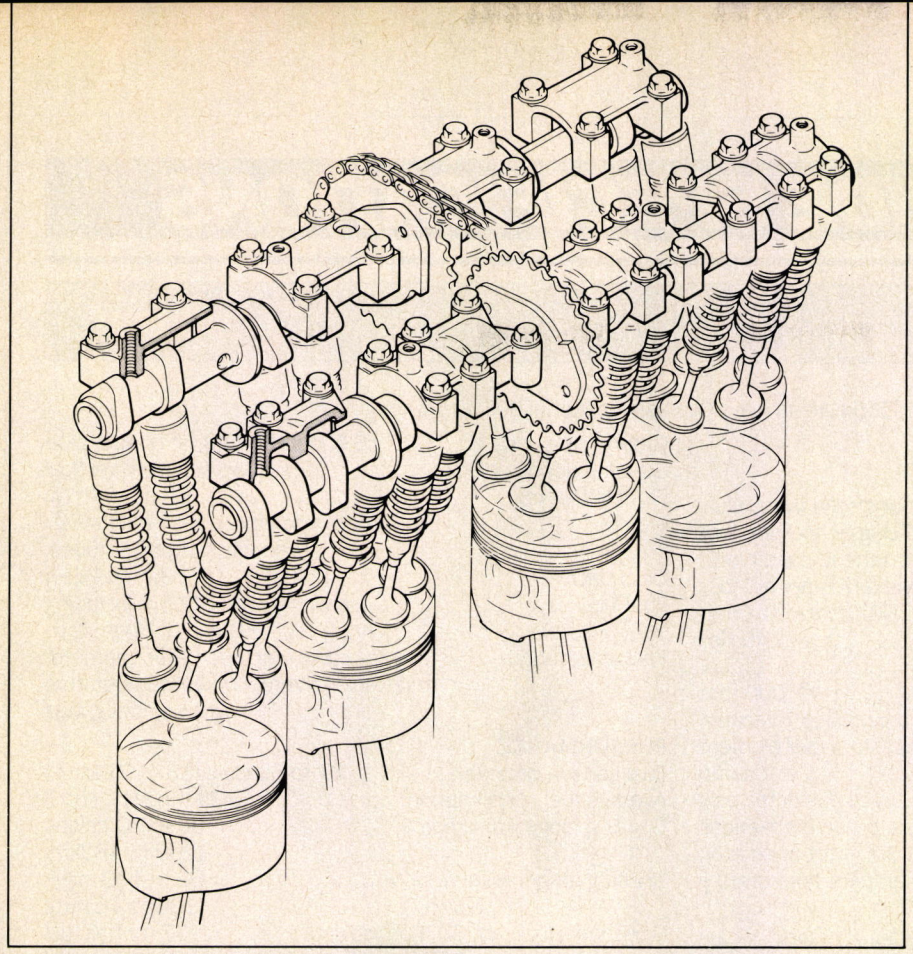


Closely spaced Mikuni carbs positioned for arrow-straight intake tracts

Keeping the FZ's fuel charge on the straight and narrow.

COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Yamaha FZ750-'85	11.317/118.57	140	485	129
Honda VF750F Interceptor-'84	11.890/114.64	140	511	127
Honda VF700F Interceptor-'84	12.323/106.50	124	512	136
Yamaha XJ700X Maxim-'85	11.779/113.63	121	505	135
Kawasaki GPz750-'84	12.114/110.97	135	502	120
Suzuki GS700E-'85	11.978/112.21	125	485	140



Twenty tiny valves use single springs and under-bucket shims

Lighter reciprocating weight means quicker revving and less wear.

works best with the spring preload set to No.3 and the rebound damping set to No.3½. Then, for a 185-pound rider, the rising-rate system works well over most surfaces. Overall, the suspension's action feels decidedly firm, clearly telegraphing everything the tires are doing. That firmness gives the bike a wonderfully taut feel, in addition to providing plenty of cornering clearance. Heel the FZ over, and you'll find the pegs drag first, long before the undercarriage touches down, and just before reaching the tires' edges.

The same spring and damping rates that work so well on a winding road keep the FZ from being more than a short-hop highway cruiser, though. Even with 0 psi in the fork, and the shock's adjusters set to No.1, small, repetitive bumps pound the rider though the low-rise bars and thin, narrow seat. Plus, the solid-mounted engine vibrates noticeably between 4000 and 5000 rpm—that's 57-70 mph in sixth. The racer-crouch riding position only exacerbates the situation, placing much of the rider's weight on his hands, so that every tingle and expansion joint makes itself obvious.

But the FZ's freeway manners seem lacking only when compared to the cushiness of something like Yamaha's FJ1100. And card-carrying knee-draggers certainly won't be put off by a relative shortage of long-term comfort. That contingent will love the FZ750 instantly. It offers class-leading horsepower and possesses superb handling, as well as composure and feel that's clearly the result of racetrack knowledge.

What counts, though, is that Yamaha didn't lose sight of its goals for the FZ. Yamaha took a rational approach to building a sportbike—designing it as one, cohesive whole, and it paid off handsomely. The FZ750 is clearly more than a sum of its parts: There's no one innovation that makes the bike as good as it is. Rather, it's the way all of the parts work together. Added up, the FZ comes off as more than just a great sportbike; it's the blueprint for sportbikes of the future. Or at least for those that expect to compete with the FZ750. •

Nits:

- Screwdriver needed to remove sidecover, in order to gain access to shock adjustments.
- Ribbed, slightly barrel-shaped grips are uncomfortable.
- Mirrors offer insufficient view of the area directly behind the bike.

Picks:

- Fork tubes are interconnected for air adjustment.
- Reserve switch conveniently placed.

Ride Review

• For those of you who thought I had a screw loose when I called Yamaha's FJ1100 a touring bike, here's my proof: Yamaha's FZ750. *This* is a sportbike. Even though the FJ holds an edge in straightline acceleration and top speed, it's only by a hair's breadth. Besides, the FZ's instantaneous power delivery—coupled with its delicious top-end rush—makes it *feel* faster. And in handling, there's no comparison; the FZ has a finely honed feel that makes the FJ1100 seem as bulky and unresponsive as a Greyhound bus.

Don't get me wrong; I still like the FJ1100—it's fast, comfortable and still one of the best *touring* bikes you can buy. It's just that when the road starts twisting like an earthworm on a hot sidewalk, my first choice to unravel it is simple—give me an FZ750. —*Jim Miller*

• Pencils have become standard issue for sportbike enthusiasts these days. It seems that each time a new backroad-warrior is introduced, we pencil-in that particular model at the top of the sportbike hierarchy list. Yamaha's FZ750 has made pencils and lists a thing of the past, though. The bike is *that* good, and deserves a place several cuts above the rest of the sportbike crowd.

And the FZ owes its goodness not to one single part, but to a superior combination of basic elements; it groups all the traits essential to canyon flying—handling, braking, acceleration and ergonomics—into a single refined package better than any other bike today. The FZ's got the right stuff, all right. Enough such that I'm throwing away my pencil, to enjoy the view—aboard the FZ750—from the top of the heap.

—*Dain Gingerelli*

• Three years ago, this magazine—among others—proclaimed vee-four powerplants to be *the* wave of the future. It was a logical conclusion, then. After all, vee-fours, specifically Honda's, were clearly superior to existing inlines. Still, the vees were hot off the drawing boards, and their excellence was more a demonstration of higher technology, not an indictment of a fundamental design.

But the new generation of inline-fours—such as Yamaha's FZ750—have made hash of the predictions. The FZ's motor shows that inlines can compete with vees in terms of technology. And in performance, the FZ can flat pull the eyes out of Honda's 750/700 vee-fours. What now? Well, all bets are off. Motorcycling still has vee-fours in its future. But they're not the *only* future. Not any more. —*Charles Everitt*

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Yamaha FZ750 — street

IMPORTER: Yamaha Motor Corp. U.S.A., 6555 Katella Ave., Cypress, California 90630

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $4599

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled four-stroke transverse 45-degree-inclined four
Valve arrangement . . . . . double overhead camshafts, five valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 68.0mm x 51.6mm
Displacement 749.6cc
Compression ratio 11.2:1
Engine redline . . . . . 11,000 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . four 34mm Mikuni constant-vacuum
Air filter . . . . . disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 300-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 14-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 1.896:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Final drive . . . . #530 O-ring chain (⅝-in. pitch, ⅜-in. width); 2.813:1 (45/16) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.846	15.176	5.03
II	2.188	11.664	6.55
III	1.778	9.479	8.06
IV	1.500	7.998	9.55
V	1.273	6.786	11.26
VI	1.083	5.776	13.22

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . Kayaba air-spring, 39mm stanchion tube diameter/5.0 in. (127mm)
Rear . . . . . single Yamaha shock, 17-position adjustable rebound damping, 12mm spring preload range/4.6 in. (117mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . dual double-action hydraulic calipers, 10.4-in. (264mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . double-action hydraulic caliper, 10.4-in. (264mm) effective disc diameter

TIRES

Front . . . . . 120/80V16-V240 Bridgestone Exedra G527 tubeless
Rear . . . . . 130/80V18-V240 Bridgestone Exedra G528 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight . . . . . 485 lbs. (220.0kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . 49.1% front, 50.9% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 981 lbs. (445kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 458 lbs. (208kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 57.9 to 59.1 in. (1471 to 1501mm)
Seat height . . . . . 31.2 in. (793mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 25.8 in. (655mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 13.5 in. (344mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 6.1 in. (156mm), at header pipe
Steering head angle . . . . . 25.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 3.7 in. (94mm)
Frame . . . . . round- and box-section mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . 3.7 qt. (3.5/)
Fuel tank . . . . . steel, 6.0 gal. (22.6/), including 2.0 gal. (7.6/) reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, coolant temperature gauge, fuel gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 31 to 50 mpg (13 to 21 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 39 mpg (17 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . 186 to 300 miles (299 to 483km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . . 62 to 100 miles (100 to 161km)
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . 27 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . 50 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . 11.317 sec., 118.57 mph (191 kph)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 140 mph (225 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 29 ft. (8.8m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 129 ft. (39.3m)

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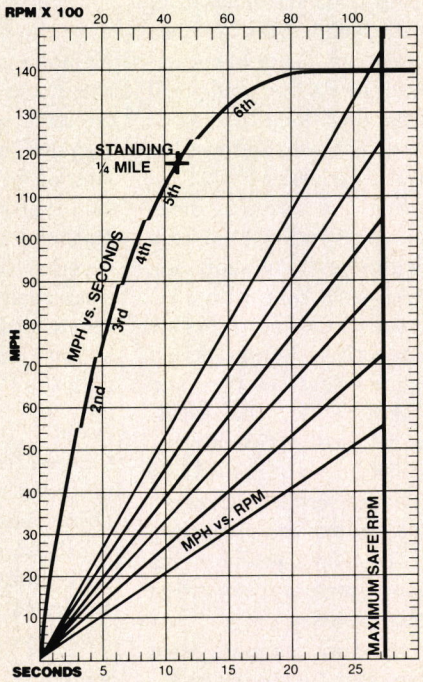

All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

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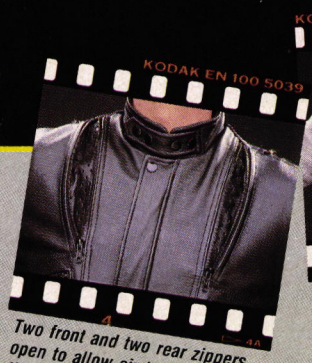
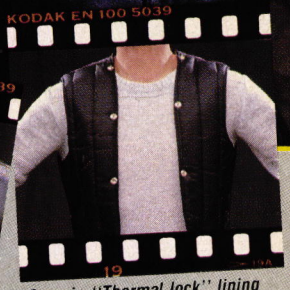


Two front and two rear zippers open to allow air to flow through the garment.



Snap-in "Thermal lock" lining insures maximum heat retention.

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The world's finest collection of riding leather.

Send for ordering information catalog. The complete Hein Gericke Leather Collection ranges in price from $160.00 to $300.00. F.W.I. INC. 201 W. Bastanchury Road, Fullerton, CA. 92635

Design: STUDIO 10

WHY AMERICA RELIES O

Trust isn't quickly earned.

So when a prestigious motorcycle touring magazine* reported that an astonishing 93% of Honda Gold Wing™ owners responding to its survey would purchase another Gold Wing, we knew what their confidence was based on.

The only motorcycle engine designed exclusively for long-distance touring.

Today's Gold Wing engine is the culmination of over a decade of experience and refinement.

Millions and millions of highway miles.

The product of years of owner feedback.

Intensive research and development. And the kind of technical achievement that makes Honda

Honda's exclusive electronically-controlled vacuum advance produces exceptional roll-on performance from virtually any point in the powerband, while optimizing fuel economy.

The thermostatically-controlled, liquid-cooled, horizontally-opposed four-cylinder configuration of the GL1200 engine is unparalleled for its efficiency, reliability and smoothness. It also contributes to an extremely low center of gravity.

Performance is so smooth that at 3,400rpm a nickel can be balanced on the cam belt cover. Or, a $20 Golden Eagle.

The 1182cc engine has a solid one-piece forged crankshaft that spins on high performance Kelmet bearings.

The GL1200 engine develops an impressive 75.2 ft/lbs of torque at 5,000rpm. Even more impressive, when cruising at just 2,500rpm the engine produces 65.3 ft/lbs of torque, generating effortless roll-on performance in almost any situation.

ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET AND EYE PROTECTION. *Road Rider Magazine, October 1983:** See your Honda dealer for complete details. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice. © 1985 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. (5/85) For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. Or write: American Honda, Dept. 086, P.O. Box 7055, No. Hollywood, CA 91609-7055.

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the leader wherever motorcycles are sold.

The GL1200 engine exceeds all previous standards for smoothness and reliability. Offers dramatic road performance. And is the most maintenance-free touring engine ever built.

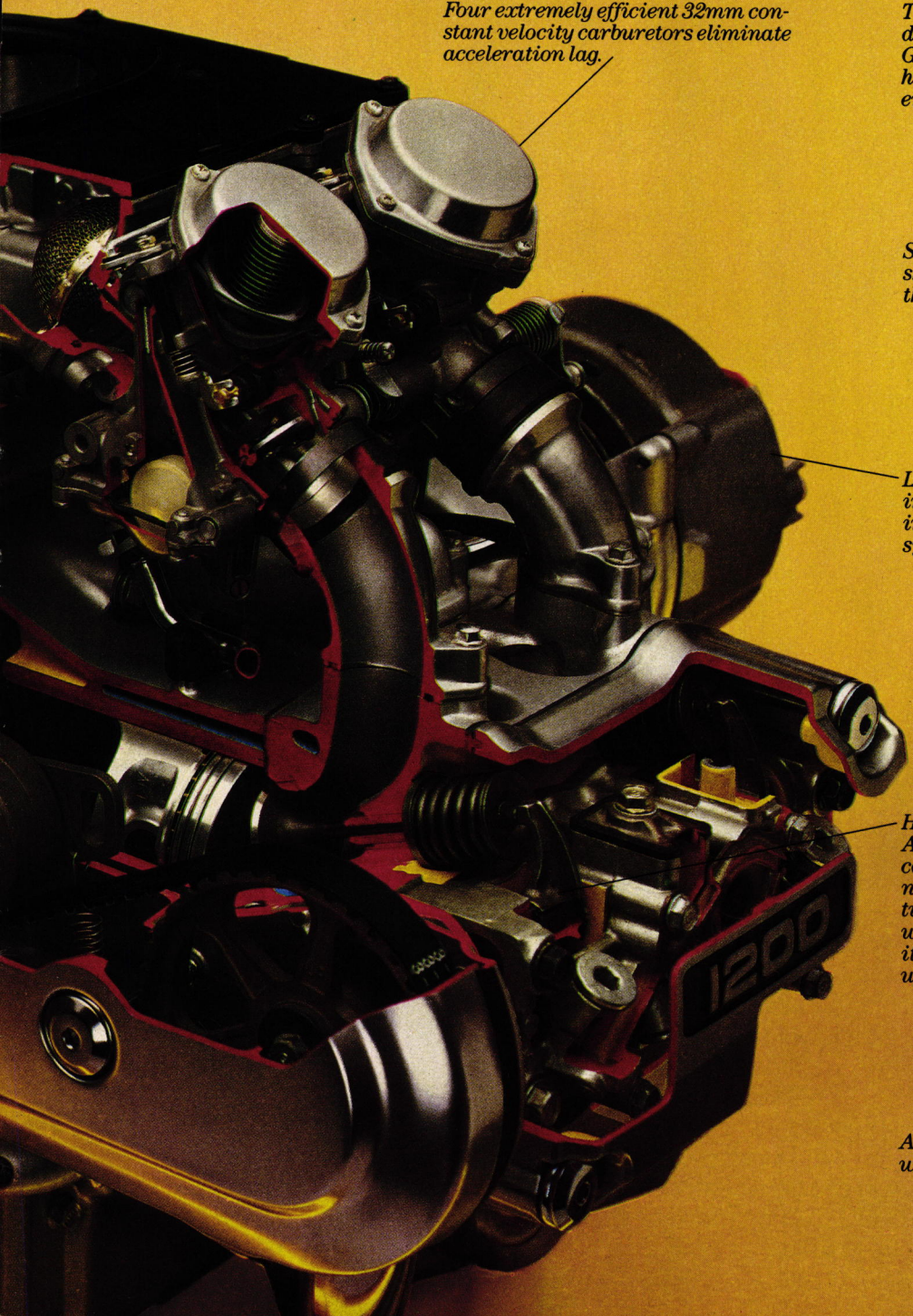
The GL1200 Gold Wing engine from Honda.

It's more than a motorcycle engine.

It's an investment in solid gold.

HONDA MOTORCYCLES

FOLLOW THE LEADER



Four extremely efficient 32mm constant velocity carburetors eliminate acceleration lag.

The smooth four-speed plus overdrive fifth transmission allows the GL1200 engine to turn slower at highway speeds, resulting in longer engine life.

Self-adjusting hydraulic clutch and shaft drive result in a drive train that's virtually maintenance-free.

Large capacity AC generator provides increased power for accessories and includes a unique noise damping system.

Honda's exclusive Hydraulic Valve Adjuster system puts an end to costly valve adjustment maintenance, while delivering crisp, "just tuned" performance. Combined with a solid state electronic ignition, it makes complicated engine tune-ups a thing of the past.

*A two-year, unlimited mileage warranty is standard equipment.***

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If you're a good rider, it's a safe bet you'll want Dairyland Insurance.

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So don't be taken for a ride. Call a Dairyland agent today.

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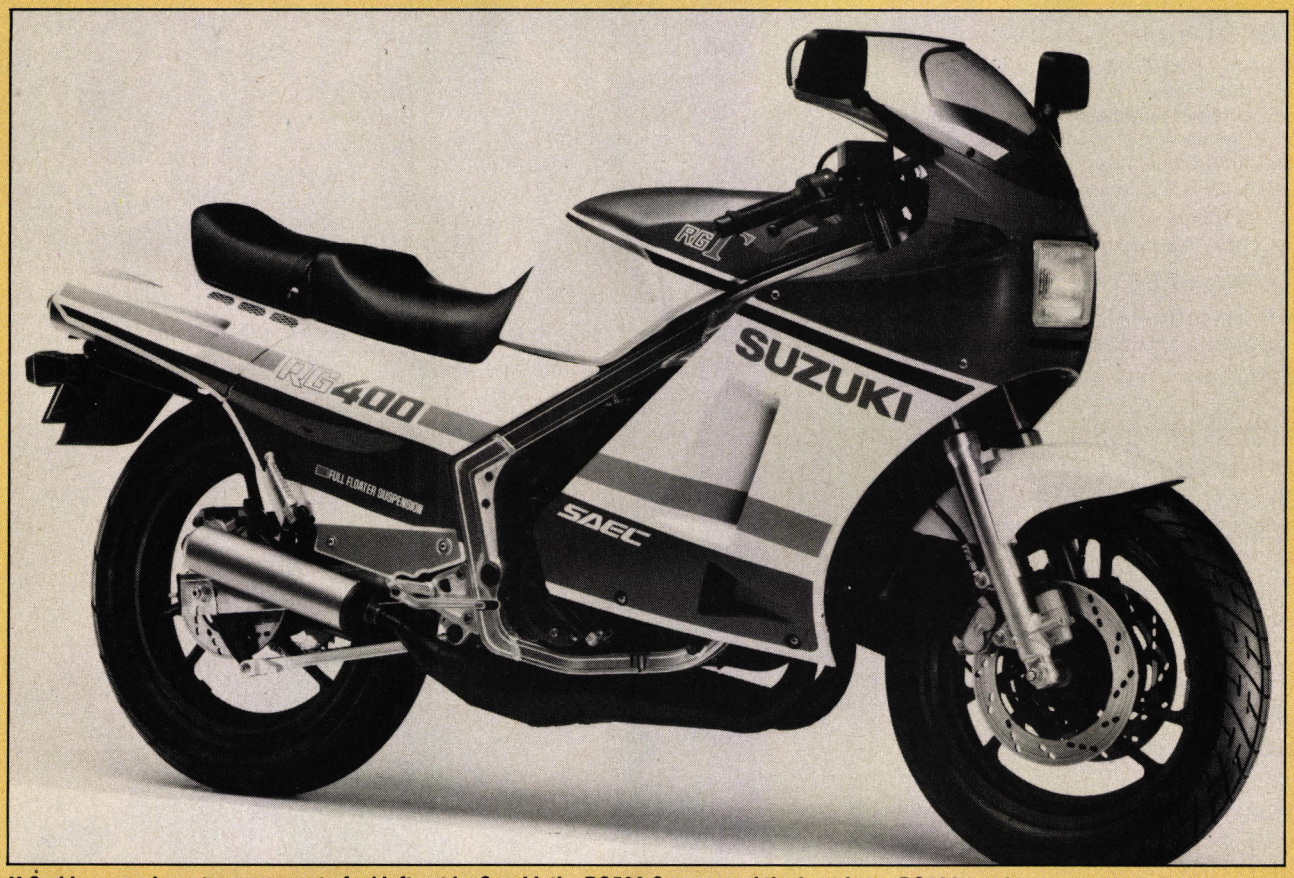
GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY JOE KRESS



U.S. riders now have two reasons to feel left out by Suzuki: the RG500 Gamma and the brand-new RG400 version

This downsized square-four, just like its half-liter role model, is for Japan only.

COMING SOON

• At the Cologne motorcycle show in Germany last fall, Suzuki unveiled its eye-popping RG500 Gamma, a street-legal version of the firm's world-championship-winning Grand Prix racebike. Now, Suzuki has another version of the Gamma: the RG400. But this one, just like its larger stablemate, is hands-off material for American riders; the RG400 will be sold in the Japanese market only.

Also like the 500 Gamma, this downsized street racer's power comes from a two-stroke, twin-crank square-four motor featuring Suzuki's Automatic Exhaust Control (SAEC). The Suzuki system uses rotating valves situated near the exhaust ports, similar to Yamaha's Power Valve design. SAEC's function, though, is more akin to that of Honda's ATAC, in that it uses the valves to increase expansion chamber volume at certain engine rpm. That bit of technical exotica helps the RG400 Gamma produce a claimed 50 horsepower at 9000 rpm.

Suzuki's scaled-down screamer also benefits from the big Gamma's frame design and suspension components, too. Aluminum box-section tubing makes up the 400's frame, with a front fork that adjusts both for preload and anti-dive, and a Suzuki-standard Full Floater rear end for the suspension package. A 16-inch wheel up front and a 17-inch rear wheel round out a machine that, unfortunately, few Americans will ever get to ride.

• Still, the Japanese don't have the exclusive rights to building trick, two-stroke street machines. Consider the latest from Gilera, the NGR250. A liquid-cooled engine that pumps out a claimed 38-horsepower, a six-speed gearbox, square-tube frame and single-shock rear suspension give this Italian-built two-stroke world-class credentials. And its bodywork lends it a world-class look, too, including an integrated chin spoiler. *Continued*

Some thoughts on motorcycle lubrication from Robert H. Wehman, president and chief engineer of Spectro Oils of America and Intercontinental Lubricants Corp.

GOLDEN SPECTRO 4 and GOLDEN SPECTRO premix have become the standard of quality among motorcycle lubricants.

GOLDEN SPECTRO motorcycle Gear Lube, GOLDEN SPECTRO Chain Lube, SPECTRO Filter Fluid SPECTRO Contact Cleaner and SPECTRO SPARE are all equally outstanding.

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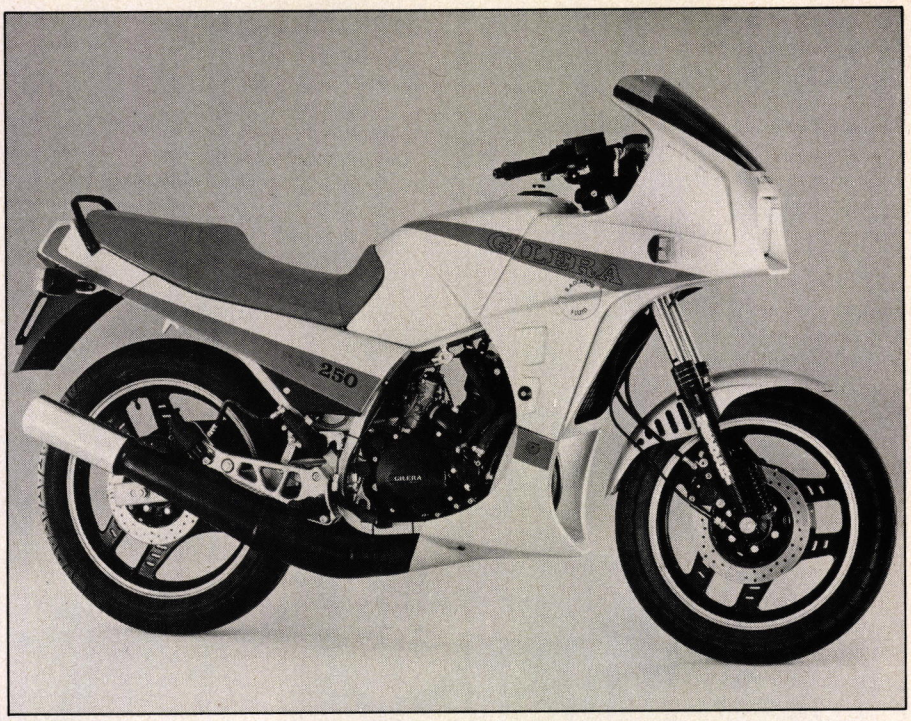
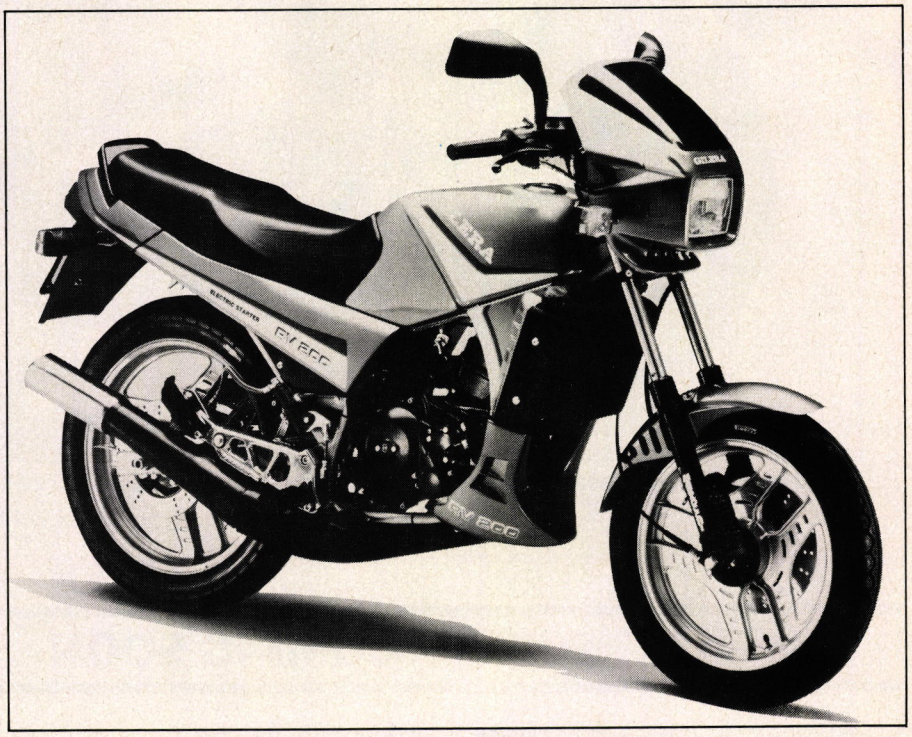


NGR250 from Gilera is proof positive the Italians still have the sportbike touch

Which should come as no surprise—the Europeans have been at it the longest.



Not every Italian aspires to Boy Racer status; some just want two-wheel transportation

But in Italy even a commuter, such as Gilera's new RV200, comes with style.

• Somewhat less exotic, perhaps, is Gilera's other new release, the RV200LC. A single-cylinder liquid-cooled two-stroke motor powers this bike, too, but downsizing and detuning keep its output to 25 horsepower at 7750 rpm. Other RV200/NGR250 differences are round tubing in place of square stock for the frame members, a single front disc and a disc rear brake instead of the 250's triple-disc arrangement, and more conventional bodywork, accented by a handlebar-mounted quarter-fairing.

• But can a motorcycle ever be both conventional *and* exotic? Fritz Egli thinks so, and his latest brainchild proves it. He's finally released his Egli Corsaro Rosso, a Ducati-powered machine available either with a 750cc or 900cc engine. And although Egli's most recent creation does employ 16-inch wheels front and rear, for the most part it

Continued

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Re-engineered in '85 to give you more pickup, not more pay-out.

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No wonder more truckers have been driving more Nissan-built trucks for more years than any other compact.

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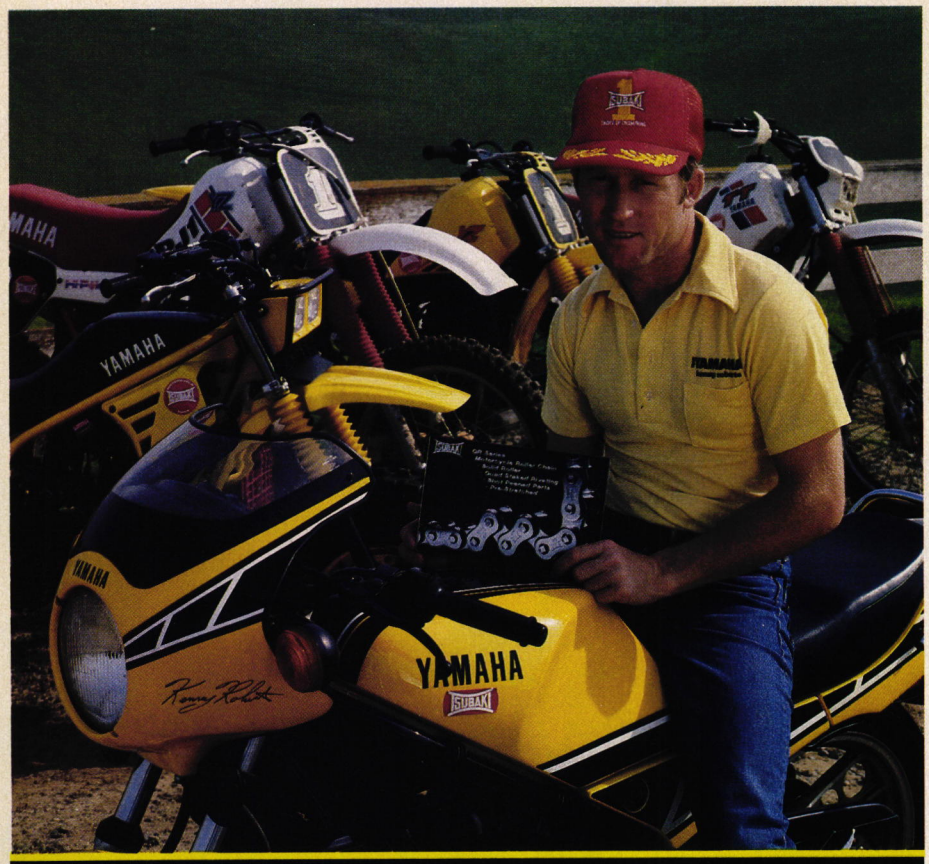

"TSUBAKI CHAIN . . . it's my choice!"

Kenny Roberts

KENNY ROBERTS' fame in racing circles is legendary. Yet, in all his years of experience TSUBAKI is the first chain he would stake his reputation on. Why? In his words. "I thought TSUBAKI was just another chain making the same claims as all the others. Wrong! TSUBAKI is one chain that really does what it claims to do. I play as hard as I race . . . TSUBAKI is what I use on all my personal bikes!"

TSUBAKI hi-performance chains are available in: QR roller series, HSL heavyduty self lube, and the new super pro OMEGA and SIGMA sealed O-ring series. If like KENNY ROBERTS, your priorities are quality, strength, and durability TSUBAKI is the chain for you.

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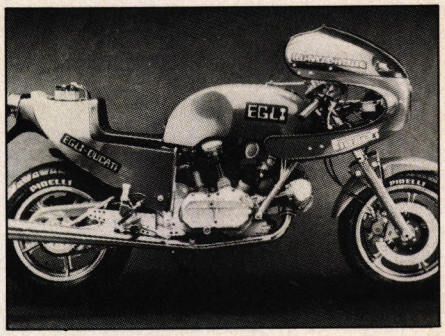
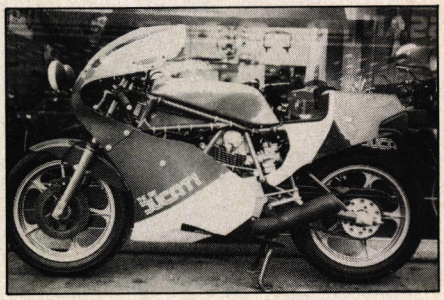
hews to the traditional, no-frills school of design. Or as Egli himself puts it, "with down-to-earth technology, using none of those anti-link-pro-dive-full-flipper frills." Remember, he said it, not us.



Fritz Egli has answered the call—simply

With his latest for a Ducati.

• Italophiles can rejoice over yet another Ducati-based special, from England this time. This street-legal F1/F2 Race Replica is the result of the combined efforts of Roy Thersby, an English BOTT sponsor, and Moto Vecchia, a British Ducati dealer. Based on the works race machine, the Replica comes standard with a 600cc Pantah engine, although 650cc or 750cc versions of the Italian vee-twin can be substituted on request. In fact, the Replica's list of options seems almost limitless. Larger carburetors, Brembo Goldline brakes,



The English cottage industry strikes again

With this racebike for the street.

Dymag wheels, special cams, pistons, and valves all can be ordered to replace a stock Ducati's components. In truth, Moto Vecchia will try to accommodate a customer's every whim in building one of these Race Replicas. And when dealing with Ducati devotees, those whims can get pretty exotic.

• That covers the sublime; now for the ridiculous. Tunturi, Finland's leading lightweight-motorcycle manufacturer, and a company better known in Europe for its exercise machines, has unleashed a full-sized motorcycle on an unsuspecting world. Well, almost; the Puch-powered, 50cc Tunturi Break is as full-sized as any 50cc machine could be. But although the Break looks more like a scaled-up minibike than a motorcycle, the Captain Marvel graphics are a nice touch. Just the same, perhaps Tunturi should stick to exercise machines, and what it does best.

• In a more serious note—at least for Britbike fanatics—comes news of the fourth Annual

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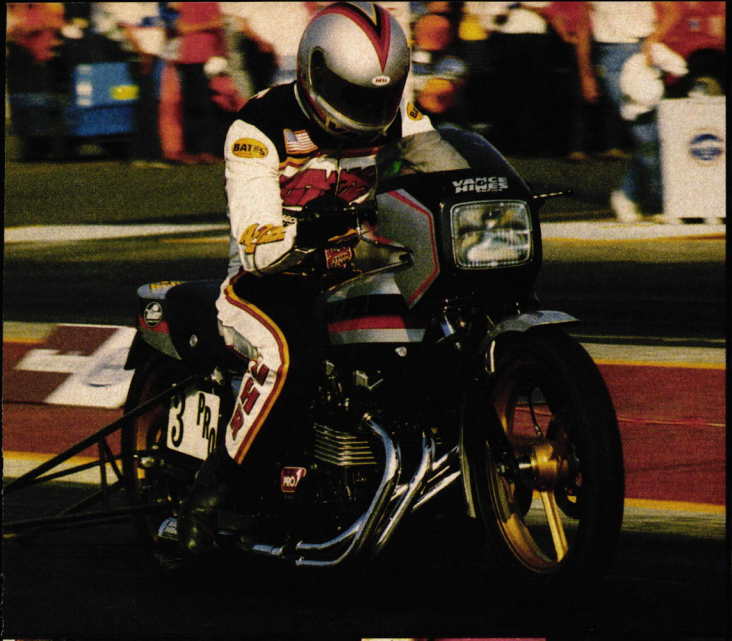

Them

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The Arai UL-80 Ultralight is the best we make. It has a distinctive wind tunnel-designed shape, and a superb Limited Edition paint design and finish that people will notice. Immediately.
Made with a special combination of Kevlar®, fiberglass and polymer filament, it's so tough it easily meets or exceeds both D.O.T. and new Snell 85 standards.
And it's so light you'll think the chin strap is just to keep it from floating off your head.
A unique Full Ventilation System channels cooling air to your face and throughout the entire helmet, while a special liner fabric actually draws moisture away from your head and into the airflow, keeping you cool and dry.
As you might expect, Arai's Ultralight is not ultracheap.
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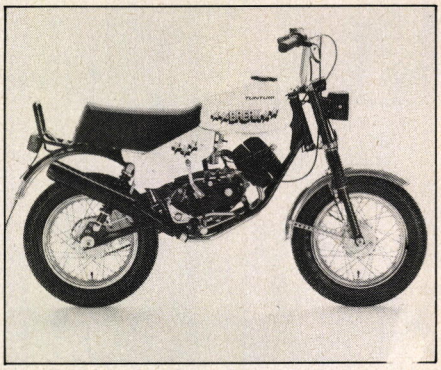

From the motorcycle capital of the world

The Break, by Tunturi of Finland.

British Bike-In and Show, set for June 29, 1985 at Cherryvale, Kansas. So if you're looking for an excuse to dust off that old Triumph, or take your Vincent on a vacation, this could be the chance. You certainly won't be alone; last year's Bike-In drew riders from 14 states, proving that Britbike riders are a hardy lot, willing to travel great distances to gather with their kind. Contact Ron Lewis at (316) 331-3347 for more information.

FEDERAL CASES

• The Congressionally ordered "55 Benefits Study," a review of the 55-mph speed limit, has resulted in some legislative action—but maybe not the type Congress had expected. The study, completed last year by the National Research Council, claims the double-nickel is "one of the most effective highway-

55 mph "Benefits Study" has backfired

And the states'-rights push is on.

safety policies ever adopted," but that conclusion isn't unqualified. It seems the study also found the cost of enforcing the law to be out of line with the benefits, particularly in the Western states.

Armed with that information, the movement to give states the right to set their own speed limits has gained considerable momentum. So far, three bills have been introduced in Congress—two in the House of Represen-

Continued

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR CRUISER AND THEIRS IS AS PLAIN AS BLACK AND WHITE.

They could see it as soon as I rode my new Suzuki Intruder into town. No other cruiser looks as custom. No other V-twin sounds this mean.

No other streetbike had ever grabbed their attention like my Intruder. Chrome on chrome on chrome. From its headlight right down to its 60-spoke wheels, Intruder is mean, clean and classic.

And underneath Intruder's heart-thumping good looks Suzuki packed the leanest 45° V-twin on the road.

That's what grabbed my soul. 'Cause when I'm riding my Intruder I become an Intruder. It's like we were made for each other. Like we're one single moving part.

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THE 1986 INTRUDER VS700GL: 699cc, 4-stroke, liquid-cooled, 45° V-twin, 8-valve TSCC. Maintenance-free automatic cam tensioners and electronic ignition. Low maintenance hydraulic clutch, smooth shaft-drive. Seat height, 27." Intruder is also available in black with flat or pullback handle bars.

Suzuki wants every ride to be a safe one. Always wear a helmet, eye protection and riding apparel. Call the Motorcycle Safety Foundation at 1-800-447-4700 for a riding course near you.

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GUIDE LINES *Continued*

tatives and another in the Senate—to allow states to set 65- or 70-mph speed limits on uncongested, rural highways. Additionally, early this year a House subcommittee took testimony from a dozen congressional members, each calling for the end of federal control over highway speed limits. And at the state level, proposals calling for Congress to increase speed limits have been introduced in California, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Washington, West Virginia and Wyoming. Lastly, seven states have bills pending that call for lower penalties for speeding convictions.

• Something else that's being lowered is the lead content in gasoline. The Environmental Protection Agency's plan to lower the amount of lead in gasoline goes into effect in July 1985, when the limit becomes 0.5 gram of lead per gallon. But on January 1, 1986, that figure drops to 0.1 gram per gallon, less than 10 percent of the current maximum of 1.1 grams per gallon.

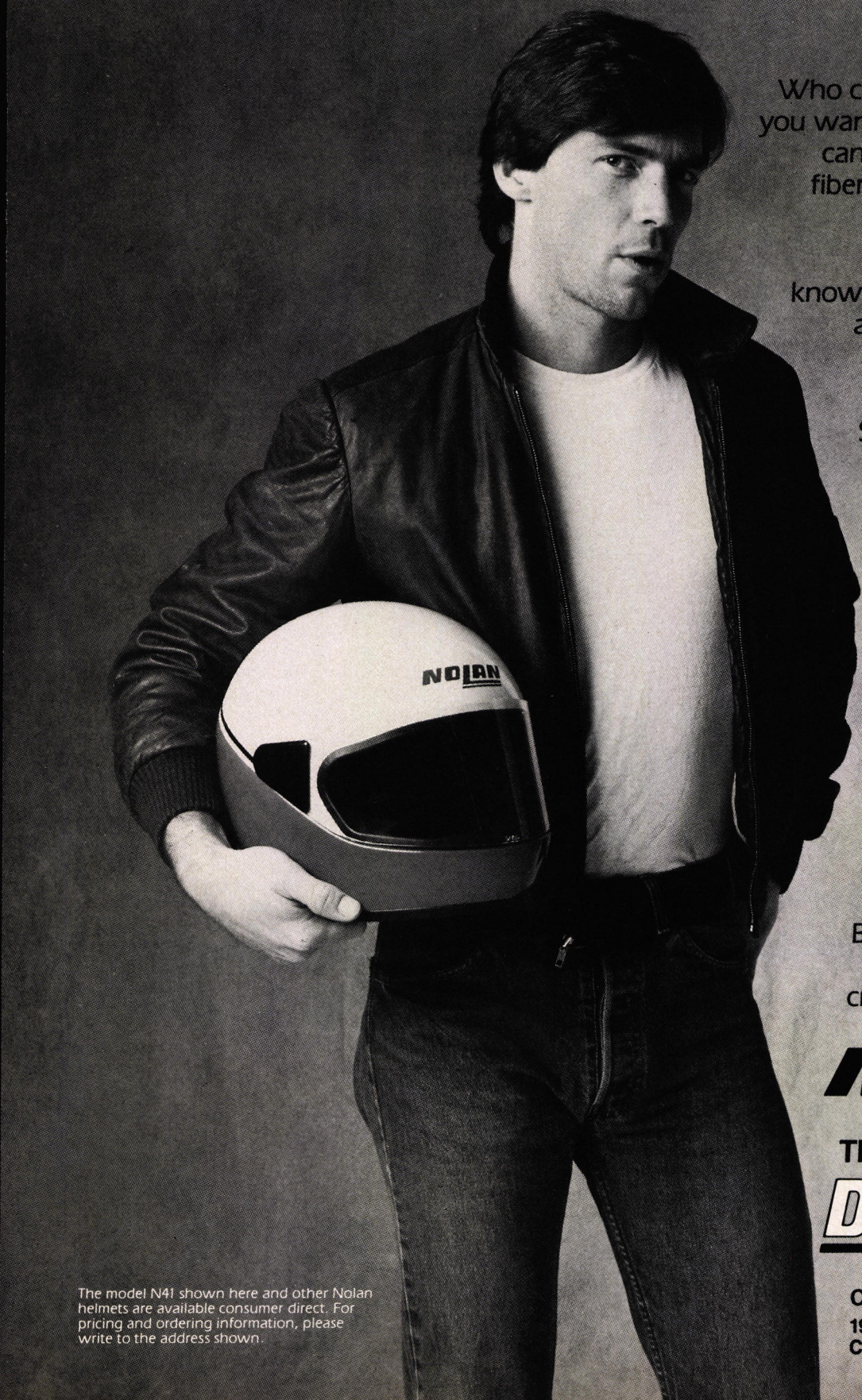
In arriving at the new figures, the EPA maintains it studied the problem of valve lubrication for older vehicles, and claims the new amounts of lead will be sufficient to minimize risk of engine damage. When the EPA first announced its plan to lower gasoline lead content by 90 percent, the AMA urged the agency to consider the effect on motorcycles. Apparently both the request and motorcycles were ignored, and according to the AMA, the federal agency has no plans to test motorcycles in the future. The AMA had hoped the final lead-content per gallon would be between 0.3 and 0.5 gram per gallon.

• The AMA also is involved in working toward voluntary helmet-use legislation in Missouri and Nevada. Rider groups in those states were awarded a grant from the AMA's Rider Legislative Contingency Fund, a program established to provide start-up money for local, regional or state-level projects. Grants have been awarded to some Indiana riders, as well, to help them create a self-funded rider-ed program, and to an Idaho group fighting a legislative proposal that could restrict access to off-road riding areas. More information concerning the AMA's funding program is available from the association's Government Relations Department.

• Iowa, one of the few states without a helmet law, might not stay that way. A bill has been introduced proposing that motorcycle riders and passengers in the state be required to wear protective headgear. The bill in question, HF26, has been sent to a subcommittee for further study.

• The court battle between Bell Helmets Inc. and Griffin Products (1982) Inc. is over. Bell had contended that Griffin's Pro Line helmet was a direct copy of Bell's own Moto-4, and charged Griffin with trademark infringement on the design, graphics and packaging of the Moto-4 helmet. But the case—and Griffin's countersuit against Bell—have been dropped. Griffin Products, although not admitting any wrongdoing, announced plans to change the design and graphics of its Pro Line helmet, starting later this year. *Continued*

American helmet makers don't want you to read this.



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The model N41 shown here and other Nolan helmets are available consumer direct. For pricing and ordering information, please write to the address shown.

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Now you can buy the best for less! Because of the strong U.S. dollar, Marzocchi Strada gas shocks are reduced $20 for the rest of the summer!

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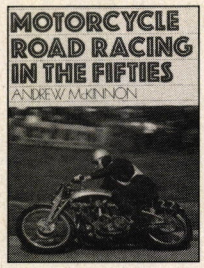
Book Review



Motorcycle Roadracing in the Fifties
by Andrew McKinnon
158 pages, $19.95
U.S. distribution by Motorsport
6115 Gravois
St. Louis, Missouri 63116

• Serious roadracing devotees might be attracted to "Motorcycle Roadracing in the Fifties," but they'd be better off judging the book by its subtitle, "An illustrated review—1949 to 1959." The book has more than 150 photographs of the era, all of them excellent and most never before published. Without those photographs, however, "Motorcycle Roadracing in the Fifties" would be almost impossible to wade through, because the text is a complete disaster.

The first hint the reader gets that something is amiss is in the introduction, which includes a disclaimer that says, "any short comings in this edition will certainly be remedied in the future." That's hardly an auspicious beginning for a book on *any* subject. In addition, the author, Andrew McKinnon, is a former correspondent for the English motorcycle weeklies, and presents this 10-year history as though he were still writing for those papers. Besides a heavily slanted British bias, McKinnon freely uses uniquely English sayings ("They were knocked for a sixer. . . .") to make his point. As a result, an American reader might have to go over a given passage two or three times to figure out what the author was trying to say.

And that's a shame. The racing period McKinnon set out to cover is one of the best and brightest in motorcycling history. During the '50s there were no fewer than 20 manufacturers involved, each fielding front-line works bikes. To its credit, though, the book devotes most of its pages to those machines, with individual sections covering everything from AJS to Velocette and Vincent. Shorter sections of the book deal with the premier riders of the era, the racetracks and even the Grand Prix atmosphere of the time. Everything is illustrated with first-rate photos.

It's the photos that save "Motorcycle Roadracing in the Fifties," too. As "An illustrated review—1949 to 1959," the book is superb. But as the definitive word on that era's racing, McKinnon's book falls woefully short. —*Joe Kress*

HARD CASH

• Honda dealerships in the United States could be taking on a new look now that Design Forum Inc. has signed a contract with American Honda Motor Co. Design Forum, a Dayton, Ohio, firm, specializes in the planning of retail selling space, and although a spokesman for the firm couldn't disclose the specifics of the agreement, he did say the work will be done for Honda's motorcycle divisions.

• American Honda, on the other hand, is perfectly willing to talk about its Team Clean, a nationwide program to tidy up the trails in this country. The company has offered ATCs, trash compactors, toilet facilities and generators to the U.S. Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Army Corps of Engineers and state park agencies. And the first stage of the Team Clean campaign is a proposed $165,000 equipment donation to the BLM, which will be used to clean up riding areas in the western United States.

• The Bridgestone Corp., the fourth-largest tire manufacturer in the world, did some cleaning up of its own last year, too. Bridgestone, which manufactures its products in five countries for marketing in more than 150 countries, reported its sales totals for 1984 rose to $2.178 billion. Net earnings were $70 million, 14 percent more than in 1983.

• According to sales figures from Harley-Davidson, the Motor Co. didn't have a bad 1984, either. For example, domestic sales of the Milwaukee Twins jumped 18.6 percent over 1983 totals, and H-D believes its SuperRide test-ride program accounts for a good portion of that increase. As a result, all Harley-Davidson advertising for 1985 will accent the company's SuperRide promotion. Harley even has launched a direct-mail campaign inviting riders into dealerships for test rides. Company research shows that once a rider tries a new-generation H-D, there's a good chance for a sale.

• Canadian Suzuki dealers were doing good business, too, advertising Euro-spec Suzukis to U.S. riders looking for something special. No more, though. Suzuki Canada has put the word out to its dealers to "immediately cease advertising in the United States for U.S. sales." The exclusive right to advertise and sell new Suzukis in this country belongs to U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp., which was somewhat miffed at having American customers lured across the border.

RUMORS

• Whispers from the clandestine corps center on a new three-quarter-liter sportbike from Honda. And our men say the very latest in a 750 from that company is a liquid-cooled four-cylinder engine, but the configuration of that powerplant might raise a few eyebrows. The pure-sport motor, we're told, is an across-the-frame inline model, *not* a redesign of an Interceptor-style vee-four.

• That's surprising enough, but insiders say Honda didn't build just *one* size of the new inline-four; we're told a 1000cc version is in the works, too. The liter-sized sport machine won't be a Euro-only bike, either. *CG* spies swear the big-bore Four will make it onto boats bound for the United States. We'll be waiting at the dock.

• And on the trials front, Honda has a surprise in store for U.S. riders. We've heard Honda might offer its world championship machine in this country later this year. But not everyone will get a chance at this piece of specialized, feet-up hardware; the four-stroke-powered plonker will be brought into the United States in *very* limited numbers.

• In the meantime, though, sources in the heartland have alerted us to a new Mean St. cruiser. But this one's not rolling from Milwaukee, Wisconsin; instead, we're told, it's coming from Lincoln, Nebraska, and Kawasaki, and it fits into a familiar Kawasaki pattern. First there was the Ninja 900, then the 600R Ninja. Then came the Eliminator, and now—the 600 Eliminator. Our man in the Midwest tells us to look for this middleweight mauler soon. We'll see.

• Finally, on the four-wheel front, our men in the know say the Ford/Yamaha technology pipeline is open and ready to pour forth new

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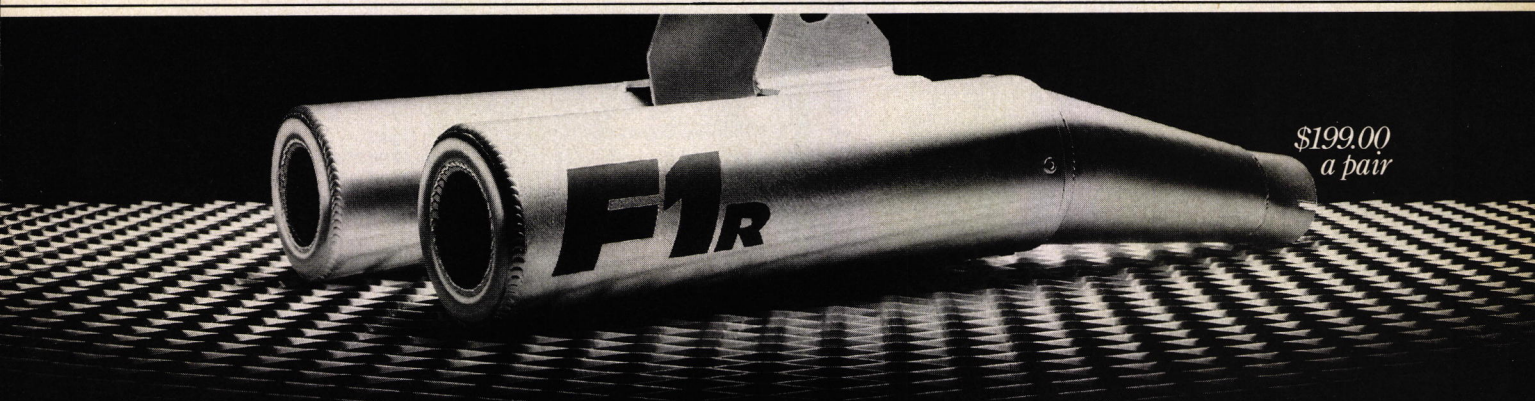

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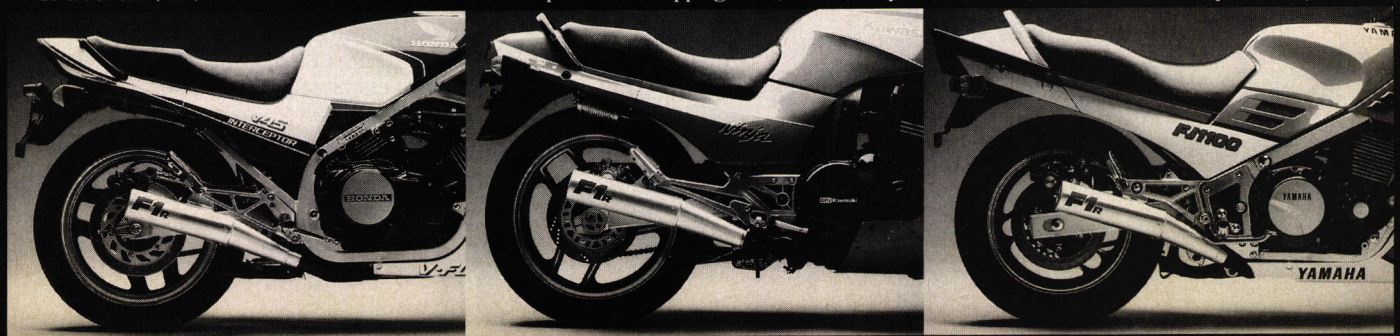

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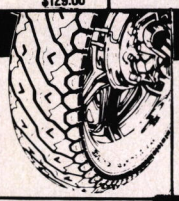

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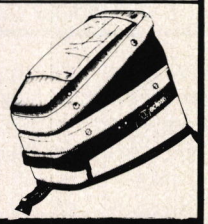

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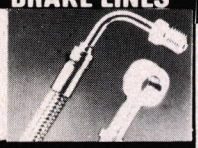

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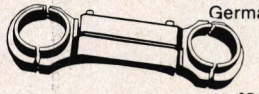

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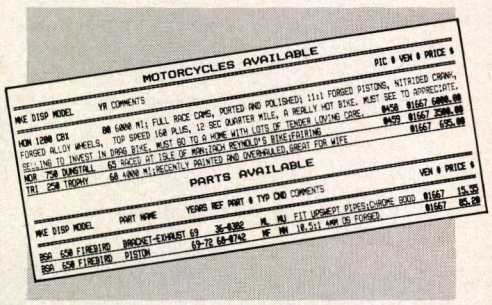
products. Japanese agents report Ford is prepared to mount Yamaha-designed 16-valve heads on a new line of four-cylinder engines for the American manufacturer's 1986 model line. Moreover, those Ford heads will be *built* by Yamaha, too—in Japan.

APART FROM THE CROWD

• You say you're having trouble finding piston rings for your Silent Gray Fellow? Or are you the guy with the world's fastest CBX for sale and no one has called with an offer? Take heart; The System could be the answer. Some motorcyclists at a Martinsville, Virginia, data processing plant have turned their brains to the problem, and after devoting two and a half years to debugging and fine-turning they're about ready to release their motorcycle information system computer network. You don't need a home computer to participate, either. For a paltry $1.25 a month, Especial Developmental Research will send you a monthly printout of every part, service and complete bike listed for sale in its data bank. The price charged to place a listing is only $2. Hookups for direct computer links with the system are in the works, too. More information on The System is available from EDR at P.O. Box 864, Department M20, Martinsville, Virginia 24114; (703) 632-8235.



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HON	750	DUNSTALL	80	43,000 MI; RECENTLY PAINTED AND OVERHAULED, GREAT FOR WIFE	0459	01667	2500.00
TRI	250	TROPHY				01667	695.00

PARTS AVAILABLE

MAKE	DISP	MODEL	PART NAME	YEARS REF PART # TYP CND COMMENTS	VEN #	PRICE $
BSA	650	FIREBIRD	BRACKET-EXHAUST	69 36-8382 NL NU FIT UPSWEPT PIPES(CHROME BOD	01667	15.95
BSA	650	FIREBIRD	PISTON	69-72 68-8742 NF MM (0.5) 4MM DS FORGED	01667	85.00

The two-wheel computer connection is here

An electronic want-ad for the '80s.

• Thanks to some skillful sleuth-work, John Adams of Redondo Beach, California, now owns a Kawasaki 600R Ninja, with no down payment and nothing to pay. How did he get away with it? Easy; by following clues given out by local Kawasaki dealerships and finding the hidden Ninja key to win. The contest was held in conjunction with Larry Huffman's "Motorcycle World" radio show, which is broadcast throughout Southern California.

• Don Sadler, of Lambeth, Ontario, Canada, didn't win a bike, but he *did* recently pick up some cash for riding one. As the 1000th person to tour Europe with Beach's Motorcycle Adventures Ltd., Sadler was presented with 1000 Austrian schillings, 1000 French francs, 1000 German deutschemarks, 1000 Italian lire and 1000 Swiss francs by that New York-based tour promoter. Sadler's prize money represents the countries he and his wife rode through with Beach's.

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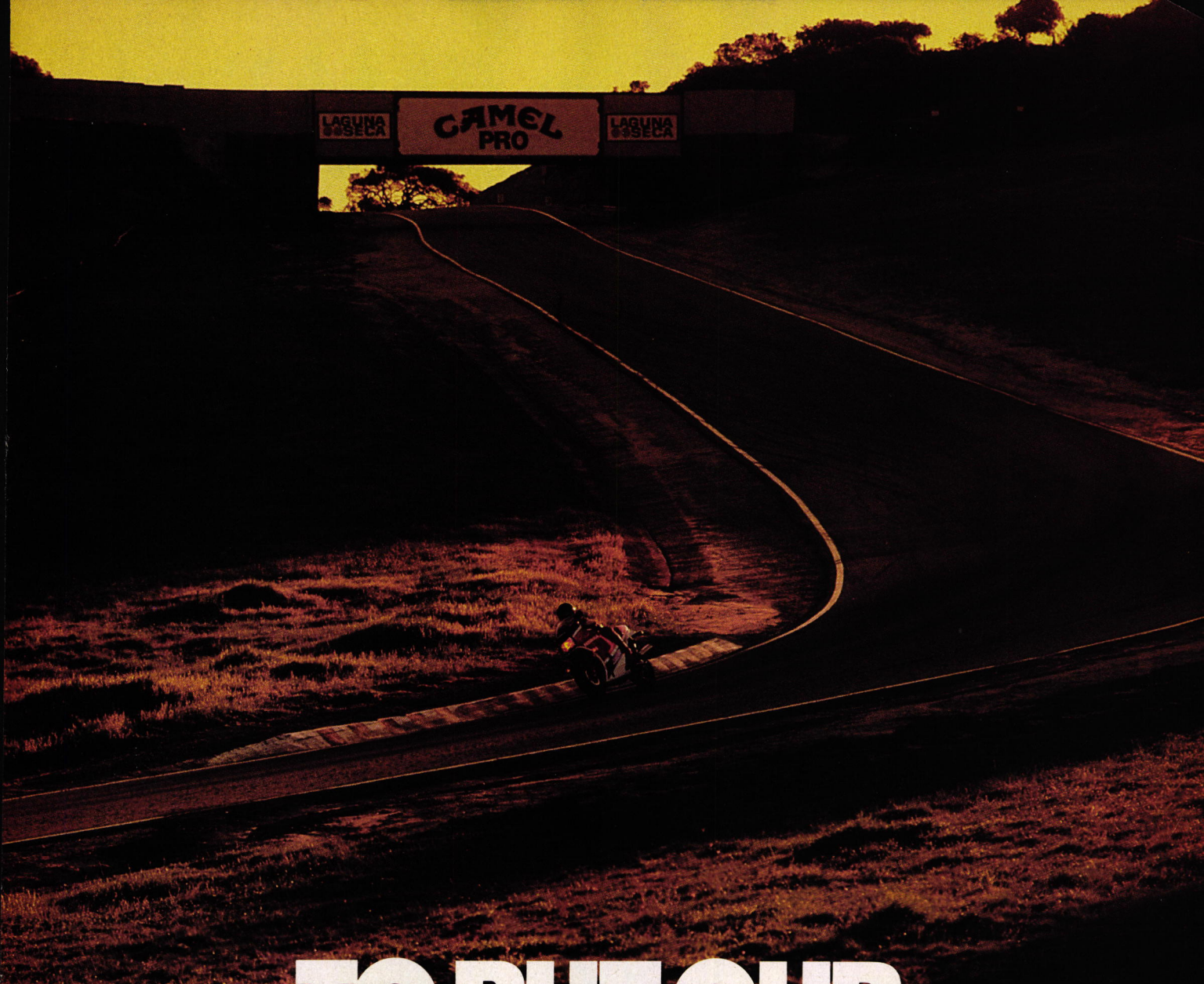

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When we decided to build a bike that exploits our racing technology to the fullest, we had to make a few concessions to the demands of society.

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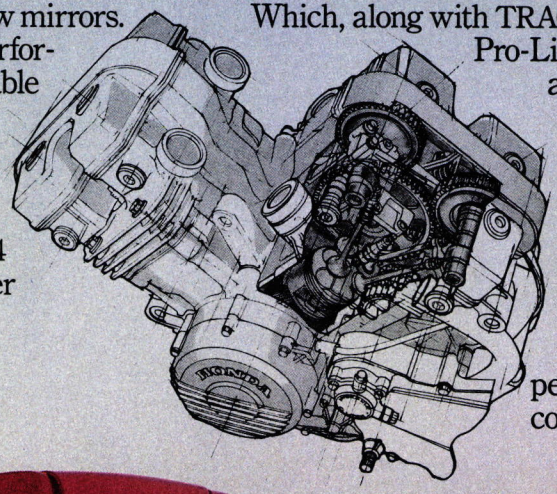
The VF1000R. Proof that, when it comes to performance, we make concessions to no one.



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The VF1000R has a 12-month unlimited mileage warranty. See your local Honda dealer for complete details. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice. Rearview mirrors are standard equipment. For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. © 1985 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. (5/85) Or write: American Honda, Dept. 963, P.O. Box 7055, No. Hollywood, CA 91609-7055.

and obey the basic speed law. Slow down before you enter a turn. Give yourself plenty of room when passing cars. Don't make any unsafe modifications. If you're riding a new or unfamiliar machine, take it extra easy. And be nice enough to acknowledge when you are given the right-of-way. Pros know that doing the right things makes riding a lot safer. And more fun.

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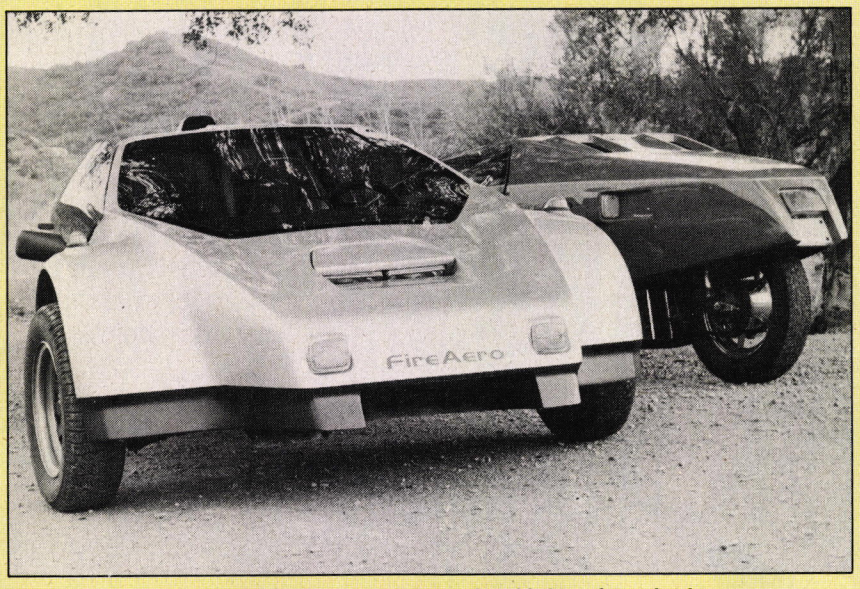

It looks like a sports car, drives like a sports car—but this is no four-wheeler

The FireAero is pure motorcycle, but with a new front end.

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David Stollery, the FireAero's designer, settled on its cost before he put one line down on drafting paper. He figures that with an initial outlay of $1995 for the frame and body package, the average builder can have a completed FireAero for approximately $5000, maybe $6500 if he really wants to go first cabin. That, Stollery believes, is what a cycle/car should sell for. He learned that lesson from Trihawk.

Stollery was one of the original designers of that Harley-Davidson-owned three-wheeler. He's also a graduate of Pasadena's Art Center of Design, and was a senior design engineer at General Motors. His present company, Industrial Design Services (P.O. Box 1156, Laguna Beach, California 92652; (714) 497-7162), regularly contracts with automakers on design projects. Trihawk even commissioned IDS to refine its three-wheeler after seeing Stollery's preliminary work on the FireAero.

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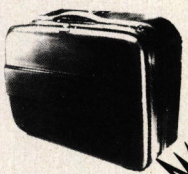

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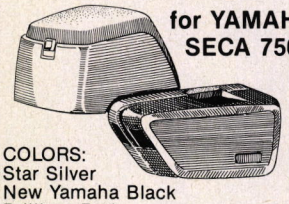

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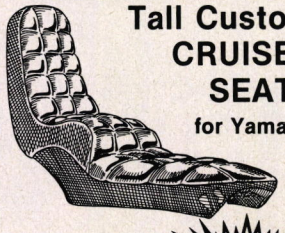

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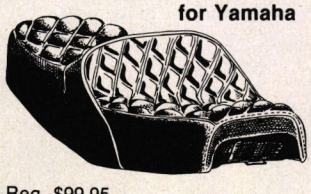

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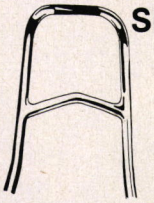

$29.95
SALE PRICE

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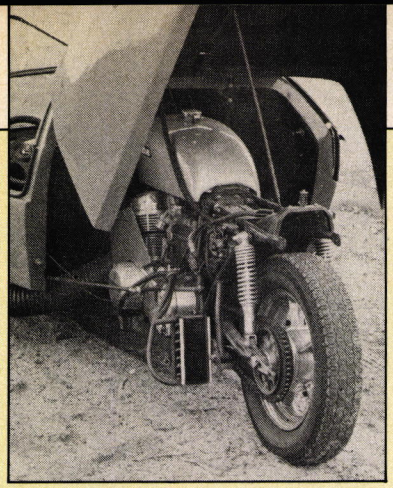

Pop up the trunk for a surprise

It's just your basic Honda 750.

But that job convinced Stollery that his own three-wheeler was a better vehicle, particularly in light of the Trihawk's $12,000-to-$15,000 price tag.

And the key to beating the Trihawk's price lies in the FireAero's powertrain. All you need is a motorcycle, minus its front end, to move this three-wheeler; pickup points on the vehicle's backbone-type frame mate with the bike's downtubes and engine. The FireAero's front suspension comes from a Volkswagen Beetle, its steering from a Chevy Chevette. Included in the kit is a molded fiberglass body/interior tub with a hinged rear deck. The body drops over the frame, and, inside, the control layout actuates throttle and brake via floor-mounted pedals. The gear shift mounts on the left, along with a hand-operated clutch.

That hand clutch is the only cockpit reminder that the FireAero is powered by a motorcycle, because it doesn't ride like any motorcycle you've ever been on. And with a claimed weight of slightly more than 900 pounds, almost any stock 750cc Four gets the FireAero up the road at a pace guaranteed to keep your attention. There's hardly a need to back off for the corners, either; this thing bends around turns like no motorcycle ever could. There are times when the FireAero shows its origins, though; motorcycles don't come with reverse, and neither does the FireAero. As a result, in certain parking situations or traffic jams, it's time to get out and push.

Some builders might view that situation as a serious limitation to owning a FireAero, and they'd be right. They won't be limited in their choice of powertrains, though. Stollery offers two basic kits: One accepts most inline, air-cooled Fours; the other will take Honda's Gold Wing and other long-wheelbase bikes. FireAeros have been built from such diverse motorcycles as a Yamaha Maxim and a six-cylinder Honda CBX. And *that's* a combination that could make budget-minded performance freaks, of both the two- and four-wheel persuasion, look at old motorcycles and three-wheel cars in a whole new light. At least David Stollery hopes so.

—Joe Kress

Continued

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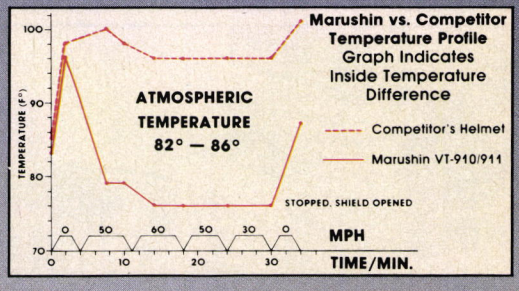

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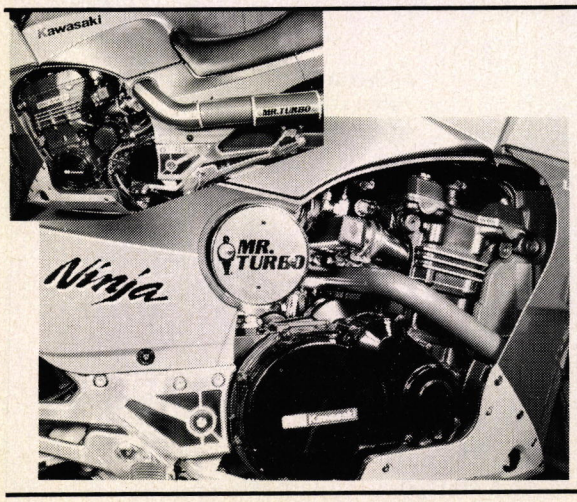

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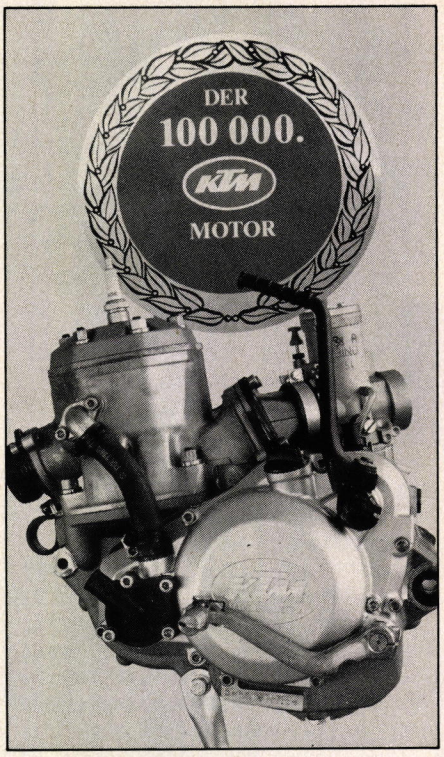

Building 100,000 engines becomes news

When they're built in Austria, anyway.

• Riders of Austrian-made KTM dirt machines no longer can enjoy the exclusivity they once could flaunt; there are more KTMs around than you might think. Witness this latest display from Austria: the 100,000th KTM engine produced. Admittedly, that's just a drop in the bucket when compared with the output of Japan Inc., but it does give reason to pause, nonetheless. Now maybe if you rode an MZ—or a Tunturi Break. . . .

One application Honda didn't think of

Merc-work for the Four-Trax.

• OK, it had to happen; it was just a matter of when, and who would do it. Well, Assault Systems, of Fenton, Missouri, is the who and right now is the when. What we're talking about here is the conversion of a four-wheel ATV into a bona fide attack vehicle, and not just for scouring the swamp for ducks, either. Assault Systems has equipped a stock Honda Four-Trax with everything the Compleat Guerrilla might require, from weapons cases to ammo pouches to military-spec rappelling rope. One each, OD in color, of course, for $3995, FOB St. Louis. Don't forget to salute.●

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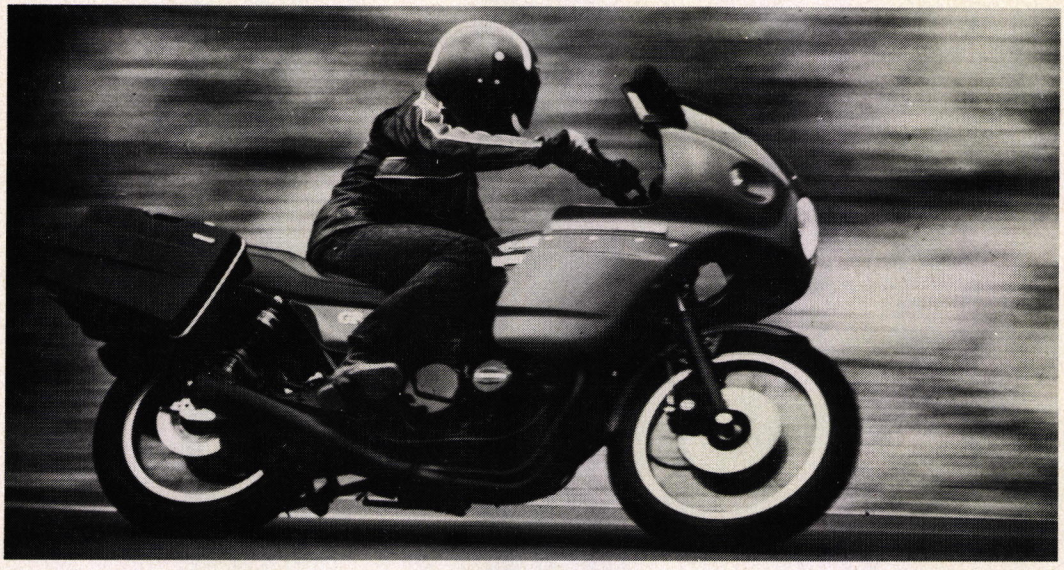

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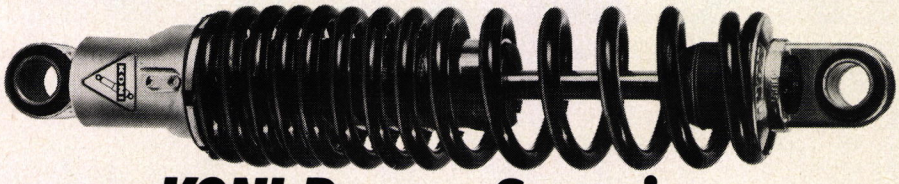
That's all there is to it. It's an offer you shouldn't pass up.



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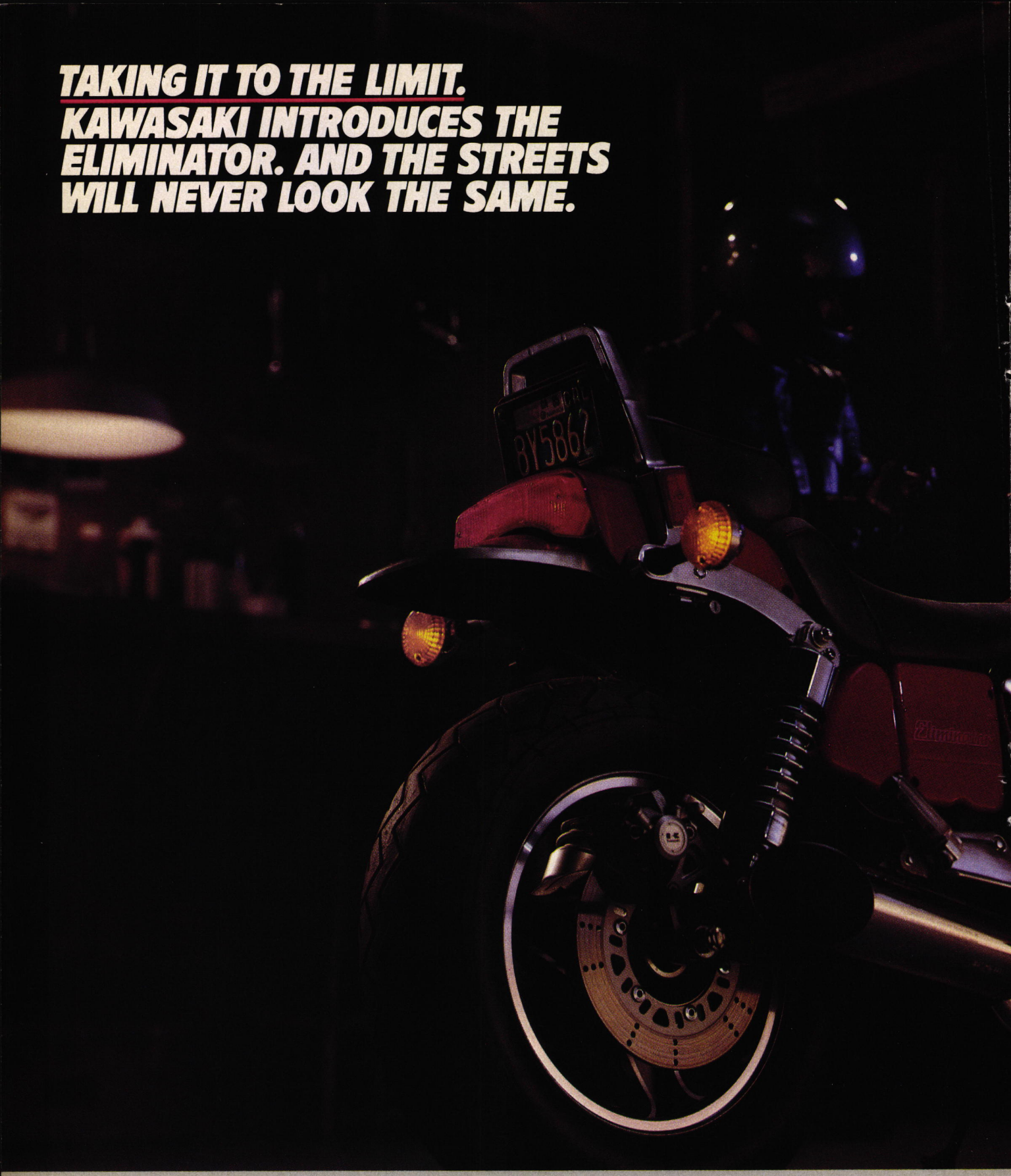

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The Eliminator is powered by the technological tour de force that

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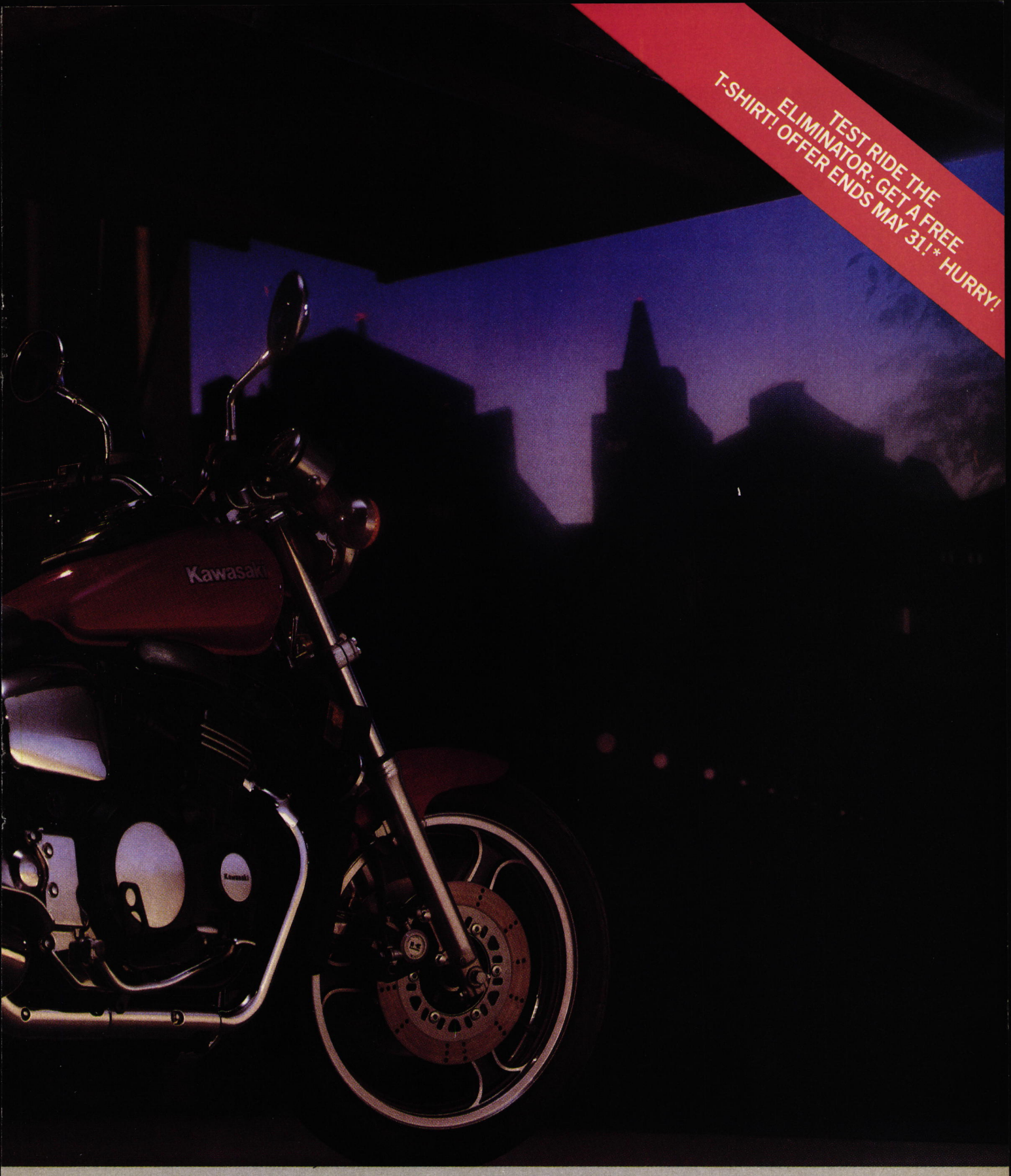

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Kawasaki

TAKING IT TO THE LIMIT

without notice. Availability may be limited. Always wear a helmet and appropriate apparel. Call 1-800-447-4700 for the Motorcycle Safety Foundation beginner or expert course near you.

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RIDING IMPRESSION:

Yamaha FZ750 Superbike

The 60-day wonder goes to the front line.

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

It was a picture-perfect two-wheel drift: I was aboard Yamaha's FZ750 Superbike, approaching the exit of Turn Two at Willow Springs Raceway at almost 100 mph, ready to get on the gas. At the exit of Two, the track's camber changes from positive to negative, and combined with the FZ's howling, 125-horsepower engine, the camber change made drifting out of the turn a simple matter of hanging off the seat and rolling on the throttle.

The horizon tilted wildly as I approached the turn's exit. I held my breath and slowly twisted the throttle, anticipating what would happen next: The front end began to slip ever so slightly, as if the tire were barely making contact with the asphalt, and the rear tire hinted that it would spin if I used *too much* throttle. Any abrupt pressure now on the clip-on handlebars would send me and the FZ into the desert landscape. Slowly, the horizon leveled as I straightened up the bike and charged toward Turn Three.

I exhaled. *That* part of the lap was done, and I sailed around to complete the rest of Willow's nine turns. Drifting like that gave me fresh insight into the FZ750 Superbike's capabilities—as well as Reuben McMurter's, who had ridden this bike to fifth place in the Daytona 200 only two weeks before.

McMurter was lucky to be on Yamaha's Superbike at Daytona, too. In fact, his teammate Sam McDonald and the riders of five privately entered FZ750s almost didn't get to ride in this year's 200, because Yamaha originally

had no intention of racing there. The company's production schedule made it impossible to meet the AMA's homologation requirement of 1000 units before the March race date. But the AMA waived the requirement, and allowed Yamaha to *commit* to building 1000 machines, providing that 10 FZs were delivered to privateers two weeks before the race. With two months left, Yamaha planned to make Daytona the FZ750's race debut.

Despite the brief time Yamaha had to prepare the bikes, the small squadron of FZs made a respectable showing at Daytona: McDonald was top qualifier of the bunch, putting his silver-and-red flier on the outside of the front row. When he smoked his clutch at the start, he became the only FZ rider to DNF in the 200. McMurter in fifth and Jim Filice in sixth led the remaining FZ finishers home. Not too shabby for a bunch of 60-day wonders.

Actually, though, Yamaha didn't have to do *too* much development; it already had the FZR750, Yamaha's new entry for the international Formula 1 class. Some FZR components found their way into the Superbike engine, too, including flat-top high-compression pistons, specially heat-treated crankshaft and connecting rods, titanium valve retainers, close-ratio gearbox and dry clutch. Further setting the FZ Superbike apart from its showroom counterpart is a set of high-lift, long-duration camshafts (also from the FZR), polished intake ports and stock Mikuni carburetors, bored out 3mm to 37mm. A collector exhaust caps off the changes, and gives the Superbike a loud, distinctive wail when the engine finds its powerband at about 5000 rpm.

And when the engine hits five grand, there's plenty of fury to go with that sound. As with most Superbike engines today, the FZ's powerband is fairly wide, without the extreme peakiness of race engines of the past. But that tractability doesn't mean a lack of power: McDonald's Yamaha developed enough horsepower to propel him to a 159.01-mph top speed, only 2 mph less than Freddie Spencer's Honda Interceptor.

High peak power means high rpm, and the in-line four-cylinder engine *loves* to rev. While redline is set at 12,500 rpm, the engine easily will spin to 13,000. Doug Van Almelo, from Yamaha's testing department and a member of the Daytona pit crew, warned me about that just before my first stint on the FZ. "Try and not exceed 12,500, OK?" he said, as I swung a leg over the saddle. My slight hesitation was enough for him to add, "Well, you can go a little past, but keep it under 13,000."

When I shot out of the pits, I discovered what Van Almelo was talking about: As the FZ's front end gently lifted before each upshift, the tach needle insisted on touching the 13,000-rpm mark. Maybe it was the beauty of the engine noise, or perhaps a wild hair in my leathers, but I'll confess that there were times when it took me a bit too long to shift into the next gear. . . .

I might have been a little rash in getting familiar with the redline, but getting acquainted with the FZ's braking took more time. Not that the brakes are hard to use; it's just that the bike is so *fast* I had to forget the braking markers I normally reserve for sportbike testing at Willow, and find new ones. Yet despite the higher speeds, the new marks were *farther* into the turns, thanks mainly to the large 13-inch-diameter Brembo discs, and the matching four-piston calipers mounted to the TZ250L fork. With just a gentle squeeze of the front brake lever, the FZ Superbike slowed quickly and predictably for each turn.

Although the huge Brembo brakes put the FZ Superbike in a league beyond that

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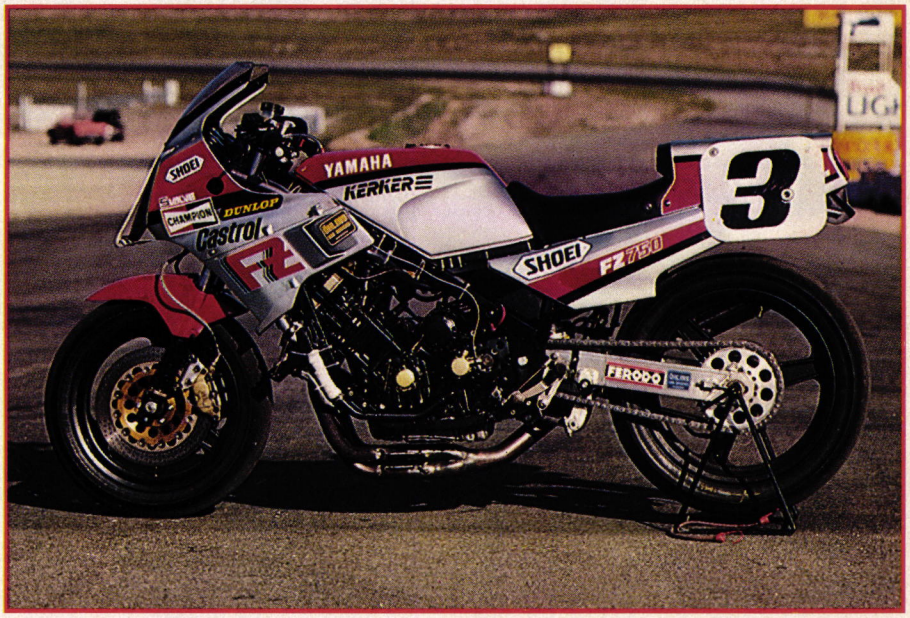
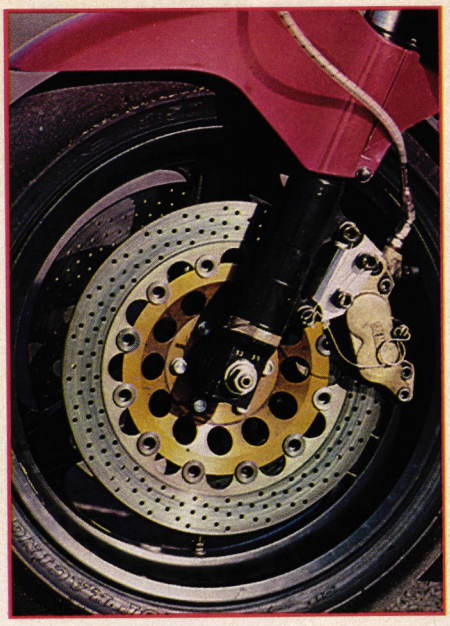


It took Yamaha 60 days to transform a FZ750 into a Daytona-ready Superbike

The payoff was a fifth-place finish by Reuben McMurter.

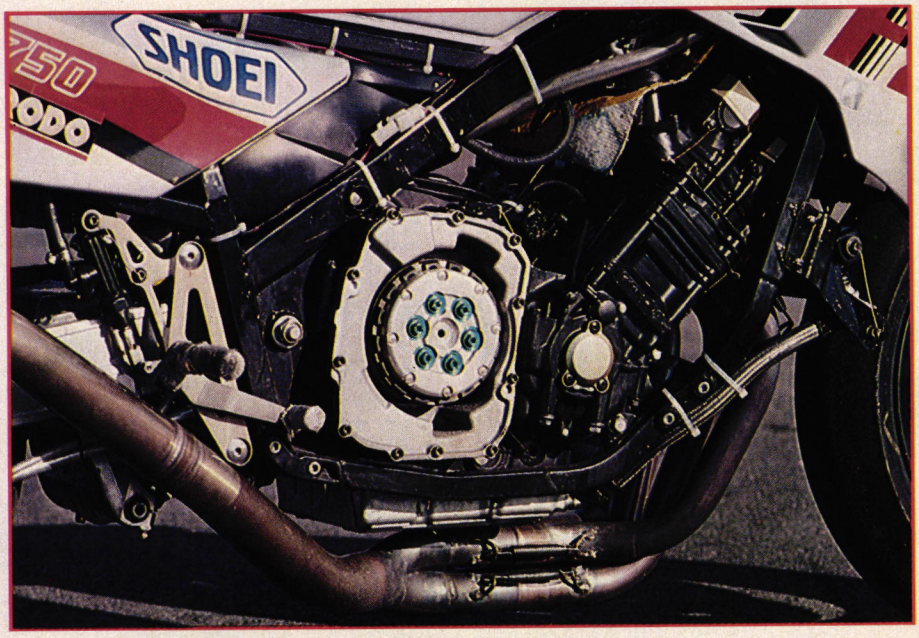


Brembo brakes stop the 417.5-pound flier

Strong brakes mean fast laps.

37mm carburetors are asbestos-wrapped

Helping a hot engine keep its cool.



Daytona engine used parts from Yamaha's FZR750 F1 racebike

A quick way to wring 125 horsepower out of the Superbike.

of the stock FZ750—or *any* sportbike I've ridden—the racebike has the same neutral steering the stocker exhibits on the street. Initiating a turn on either bike requires only a steady pressure on the handlebars, followed by some body English. But on the track, the similarity ends at the apex. From then on, the addition of the TZ fork, Ohlins rear shock absorber, Dymag wheels and roadrace slicks make the Superbike feel as though it's on rails. By comparison, the streetbike feels unpredictable and almost sloppy through turns. I found that out the hard way; after 20 hard laps on the Superbike, I got on a stock FZ, and began circling the racetrack. I got as far as Turn Three before my ride turned into near disaster: Accustomed to the Superbike's tenacious grip and brakes, I tried to use the same braking point with the stocker, sending its tires slipping and sliding before I recovered. That incident made one point quite clear: While the FZ750 remains one of the best sportbikes I've ever ridden, the Superbike version stands head and shoulders above it on the racetrack.

Yamaha intends to make the conversion from street to track as easy as possible, too, because it plans to share its newfound knowledge with FZ750 Superbike privateers. A race kit, sporting most of the hardware found inside McMurter's Daytona engine, should be available by mid-season. And if that isn't enough to convince you Yamaha is serious about bashing heads with Honda in the Superbike class, hear what Ken Clark, Yamaha's racing director, said shortly after Daytona: "I think we could be right in the middle of Honda within 90 days." Considering that it took only 60 days to get the FZ750 into fifth place in its first race, Honda better look over its shoulder—and keep an eye on the calendar. ●

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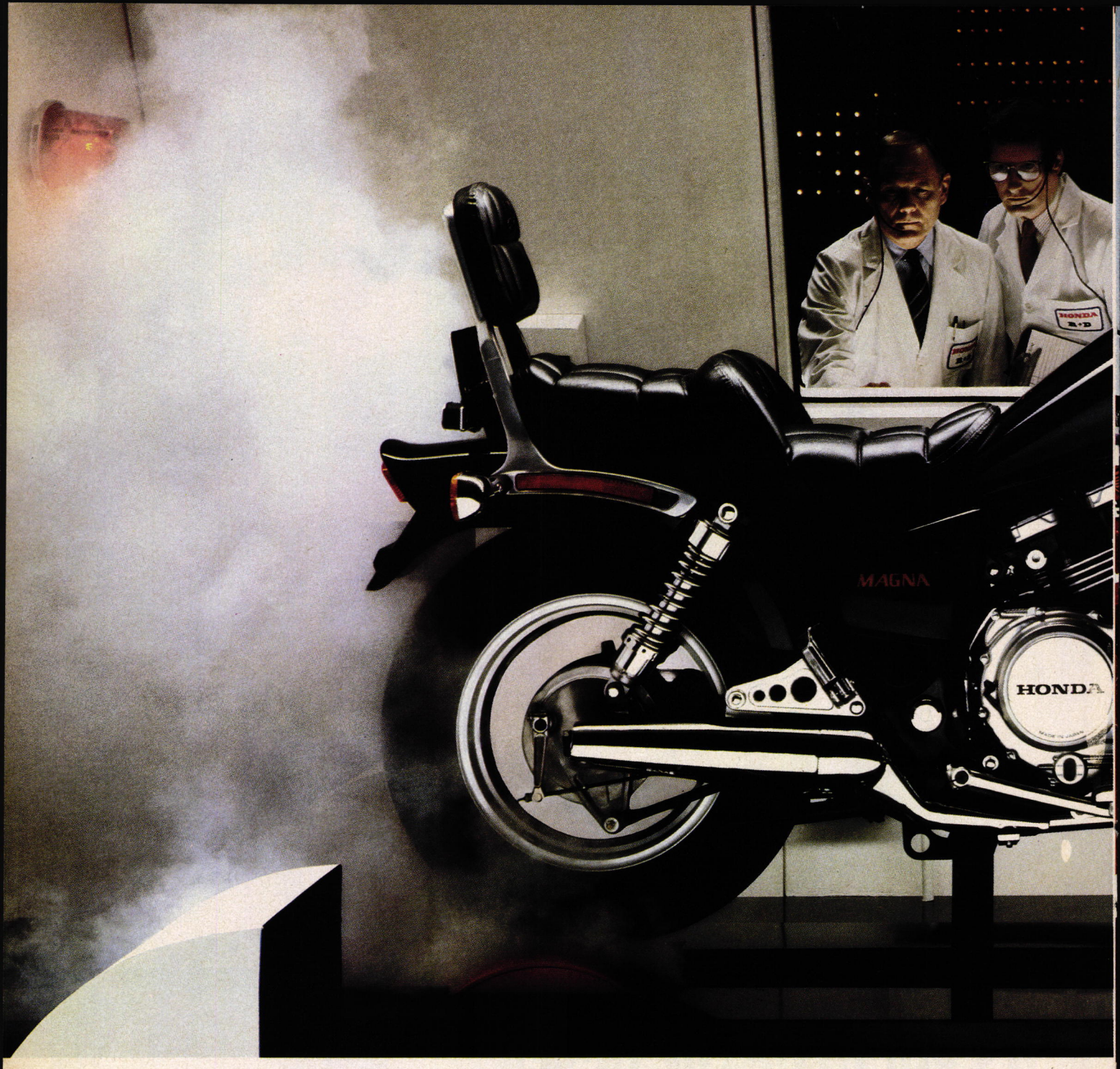

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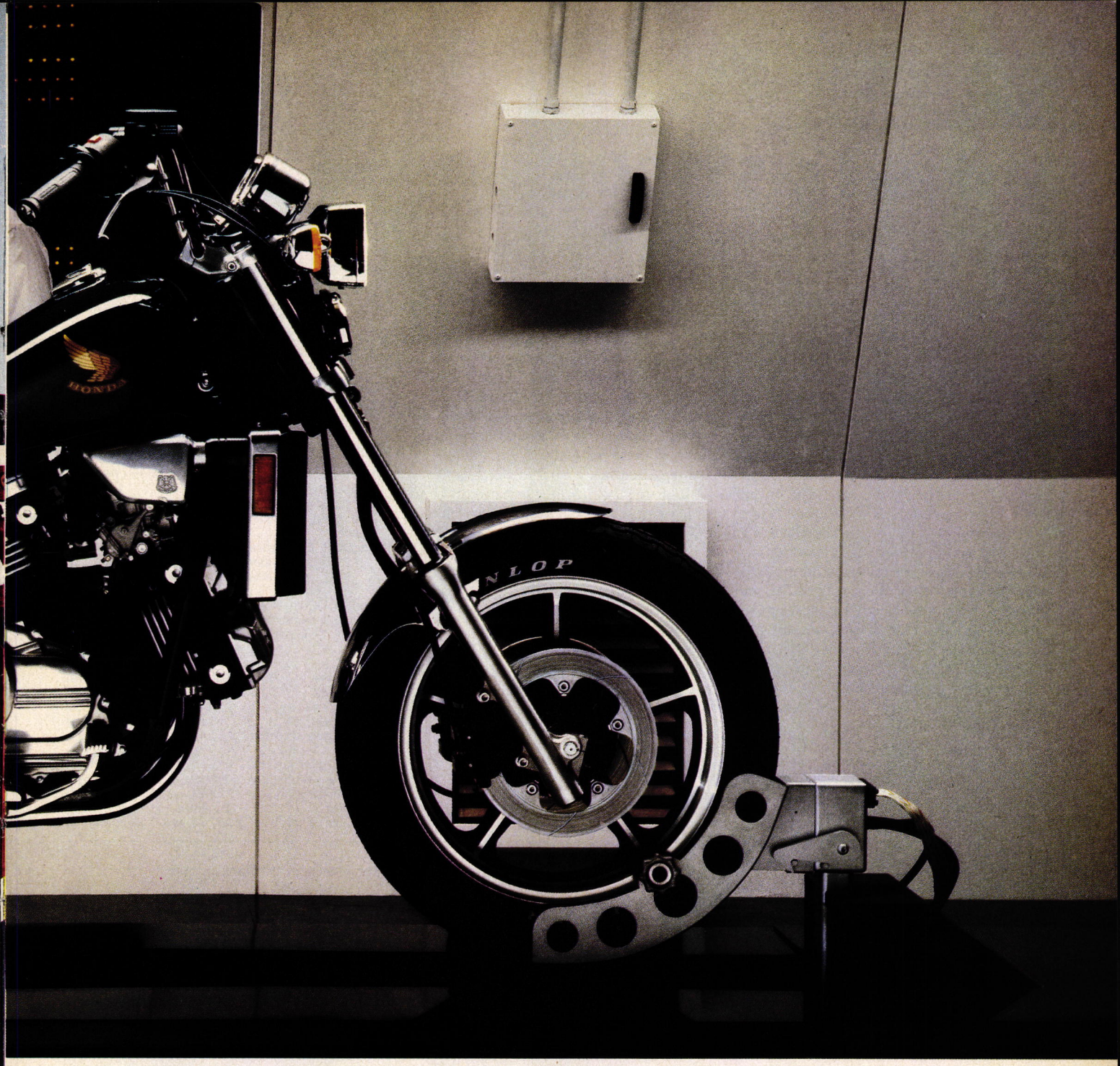

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and obey the basic speed law. Slow down before you enter a turn. Give yourself plenty of room when passing cars. Don't make any unsafe modifications. If you're riding a new or unfamiliar machine, take it extra easy. And be nice enough to acknowledge when you are given the right-of-way. Pros know that doing the right things makes riding a lot safer. And more fun.

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ROAD TEST:

Suzuki GS1150E

Second-round draft choice makes good.

• When Suzuki edged the GS1100E out of its lineup last year to make room for the GS1150ES, motorcycling lost one of its most versatile players. The rookie 1150 suffered a rough first season, too, having to go up against such top-ranked superstars as Yamaha's FJ1100, Honda's VF1000F and Kawasaki's Ninja. But rather than retire the 1150 after only a single season, Suzuki paired it off into the E and ES models, with the 1150E returning to fill the cleats of the 1100E as a do-everything superbike.

Taking the 1150 out of the sportbike left field involved little more than removing the ES's fairing and replacing the clip-ons with taller, wider bars. Apart from those changes, though—and slightly wider wheels—the '85 1150E is mechanically identical to the '84 ES. But the taller bars and the loss of some 13 pounds positively transform the bike, resulting in a far more comfortable motorcycle that feels less ponderous at low speeds than the ES.

Those changes improve the Suzuki's manners at higher speeds, as well. The wider bars, together with less weight on the front end, make the E steer more quickly than the ES. Still, the Suzuki always reminds you that it's a large motorcycle. The suspension reinforces that impression, too, by allowing the GS to move around in fast, bumpy corners, even with the fork set to No.3 preload/No.2 damping and the shock's remote adjusters dialed to No.4 preload/No.4 rebound damping. Plus, the tires and brakes make the GS seem ill-suited for full-on sport riding; neither tire provides exceptional traction at extreme lean angles, and the double-action front calipers demand a healthy squeeze at the lever for full effect.

But Suzuki didn't intend for the E-model to be an Interceptor-eater, and in day-to-day use the relatively light spring and damping rates make sense. Select the lowest settings on the suspension adjustments, and the GS thumbs its nose at most pavement irregularities; any bumps that do get past are absorbed by the plush saddle. Unfortunately, a high level of vibration benches the Suzuki's touring aspirations at speeds greater than the national limit. There's a constant high-frequency buzz in the seat, grips and footpegs, that's most annoying between 3500 and 4000 rpm—about 60-to-70 mph in fifth.

Aside from its vibration, though, the 1150's motor is a gem. Suzuki engineers left the 1135cc, 16-valve engine alone for 1985, so it retains the same major-league acceleration that put the ES in the ballpark with the quickest bikes of 1984. Better yet, the GS-E doesn't sacrifice *any* low-rpm tractability. Below 3000 rpm, the Suzuki pulls stunningly hard, and past that point the motor revs freely if not quickly, slowing its charge somewhat by 7000 rpm. And, except for a slight abruptness just above idle, the GS's quartet of 36mm Mikuni mixers provide linear response from idle to the 9000-rpm redline.

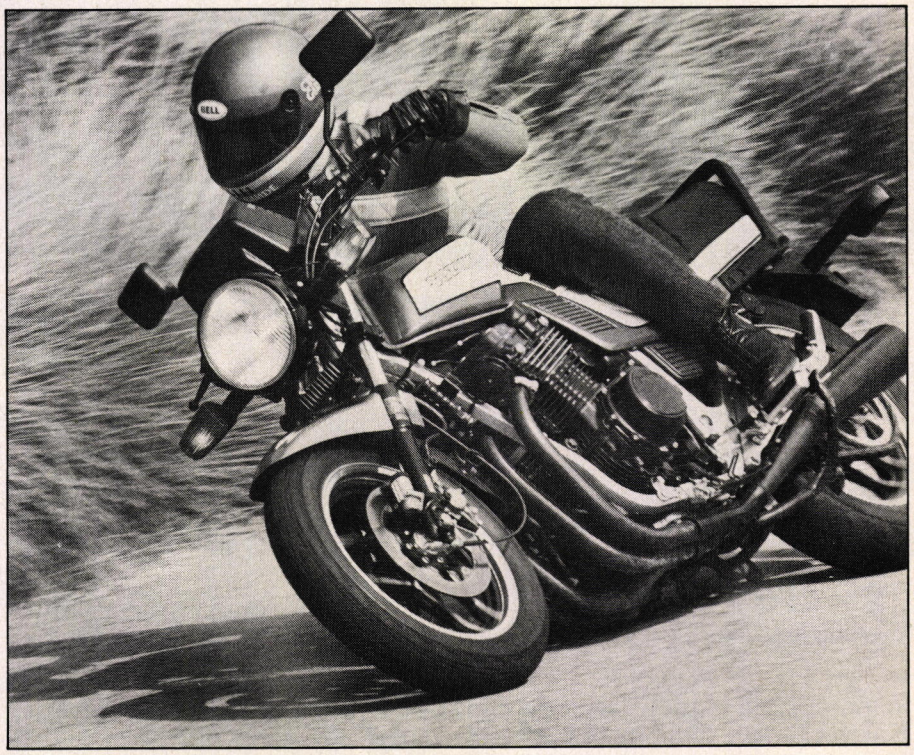
Moreover, the Suzuki combines that amicable engine with comfortable ergonomics and good all-around chassis behavior. Such a package gives the GS a flexibility that makes it one of the all-stars of all-purpose motorcycling, and sets the bike apart from sport-only designated hitters. What's more, the 1150E is a better bike than the GS1100E in every area except vibration. So don't think of the 1100E as lost to progress—it's with us today in the 1150E; a bike that you'll want to keep on a long-term contract.

—Marc Cook

SUZUKI GS1150E

Importer: U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp.
3251 East Imperial Highway
Brea, California 92621

Category	street
Suggested retail price	$4399
Engine type	four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	74.0mm x 66.0mm
Displacement	1135.4cc
Compression ratio	9.7:1
Carburetion	four 36mm Mikuni constant-vacuum
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Kayaba air-spring, 37mm stanchion tube diameter, 4-position adjustable anti-dive, 4-position adjustable spring preload/5.4 in. (138mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	Kayaba, 4-position adjustable rebound damping, 11mm spring preload range within 18 turns of adjuster/ 5.2 in. (133mm)
Weight	529 lbs. (240.0kg)
Wheelbase	60.2 to 61.5 in. (1530 to 1561mm)
Seat height	31.1 in. (790mm)
Steering head angle	28.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.61 in. (117mm)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	11.032 sec., 121.78 mph (196 kph)
Top speed (observed)	138 mph (222 kph)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	138 ft. (42.1m)
Fuel consumption	30 to 55 mpg (13 to 23 km/l)
Warranty	12 months, unlimited mileage
Available colors	blue-and-white; black-and-red



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E-model returns as varsity team captain of all-purpose motorcycling

Spring training trimmed 13 pounds without losing any muscle.

NISSAN NISSAN

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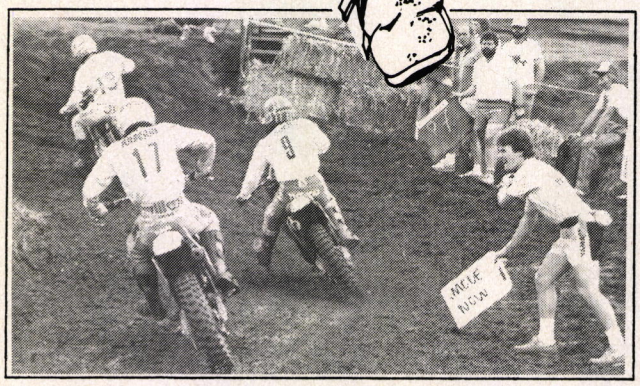

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Derby Cruiser Tankbag

Designer soft luggage for cruisers.

• These days you can buy tankbags to do almost anything, from lunch-box commuting to can't-see-the-instruments touring. Despite that variety, however, tankbag manufacturers have ignored one fact: Most motorcycles sold in America today are cruisers, and tankbags with the standard, rectangular profile weren't designed with a cruiserbike's teardrop tank in mind. As a result, most tankbags interfere with a cruiser's pullback handlebar in full-lock turning situations.

Derby has addressed that problem, though, with its Cruiser Tankbag. The Derby bag has most of the features found on other tankbags, but there's an important difference: Its base slopes approximately 25 degrees, so the bag remains nearly level when mounted on a teardrop tank. A stitched-on neoprene pad covers the base, to protect the tank's finish and to keep the bag from slipping. The rest of the bag's exterior is Cordura nylon, except for the no-glare, transparent-plastic map pocket in the lid.

And opening that lid is a one-hand operation. The bag is designed so that the dual YKK zippers enclose only the sides; at the rear of the lid is an overlapping flap with an Ethafoam foam-rubber stiffener. If you grab the flap and pull straight up, both zippers peel open, exposing Derby's claimed 800 cubic-inch capacity. And when you're not using that space, the tankbag won't sag or lose its shape, because the Ethafoam stiffener is also used in the sides. Additional small-item storage is provided by a pouch that clips to the rear of the lid, and contains the bag's rain cover, along with detailed mounting instructions.

And on most motorcycles, the Cruiser bag can be mounted in less than five minutes. Up front, a nylon strap with a quick-release buckle at each end loops around the steering head, while in the rear, a single buckle and strap ties to a frame tube under the seat. The mounting system does a good job, too, because the Cruiser bag doesn't move around, even during hard riding.

It's at low speeds, however, that the Derby bag's main problem shows up. Even though the Cruiser Tankbag was designed to provide adequate handlebar clearance, the bars of every cruiser we mounted the bag on hit the bag during full-lock turns. The Derby bag, then, causes the same problem the firm set out to solve, and offers few significant advantages. In fact, the shape can be a *disadvantage* if you try to pack something you want to lie flat. But for packing small items the Cruiser bag works well. Further, it offers first-rate construction and materials, and near water-tightness, even without the rain cover. So, if those are some of your requirements for soft luggage, the Derby bag's compromises might go unnoticed.

What won't go unnoticed, though, is the bag's style which is, after all, one of Derby's primary intentions. But if *function* is your main concern, remember that the Cruiser bag not only holds less than a standard tankbag (including Derby's own), but doesn't work appreciably better at clearing the typical cruiser's pullback handlebar. So while it's possible to find tankbags that can *do* almost anything, you're still not going to find one that will *fit* everything.

—Mike Gillies

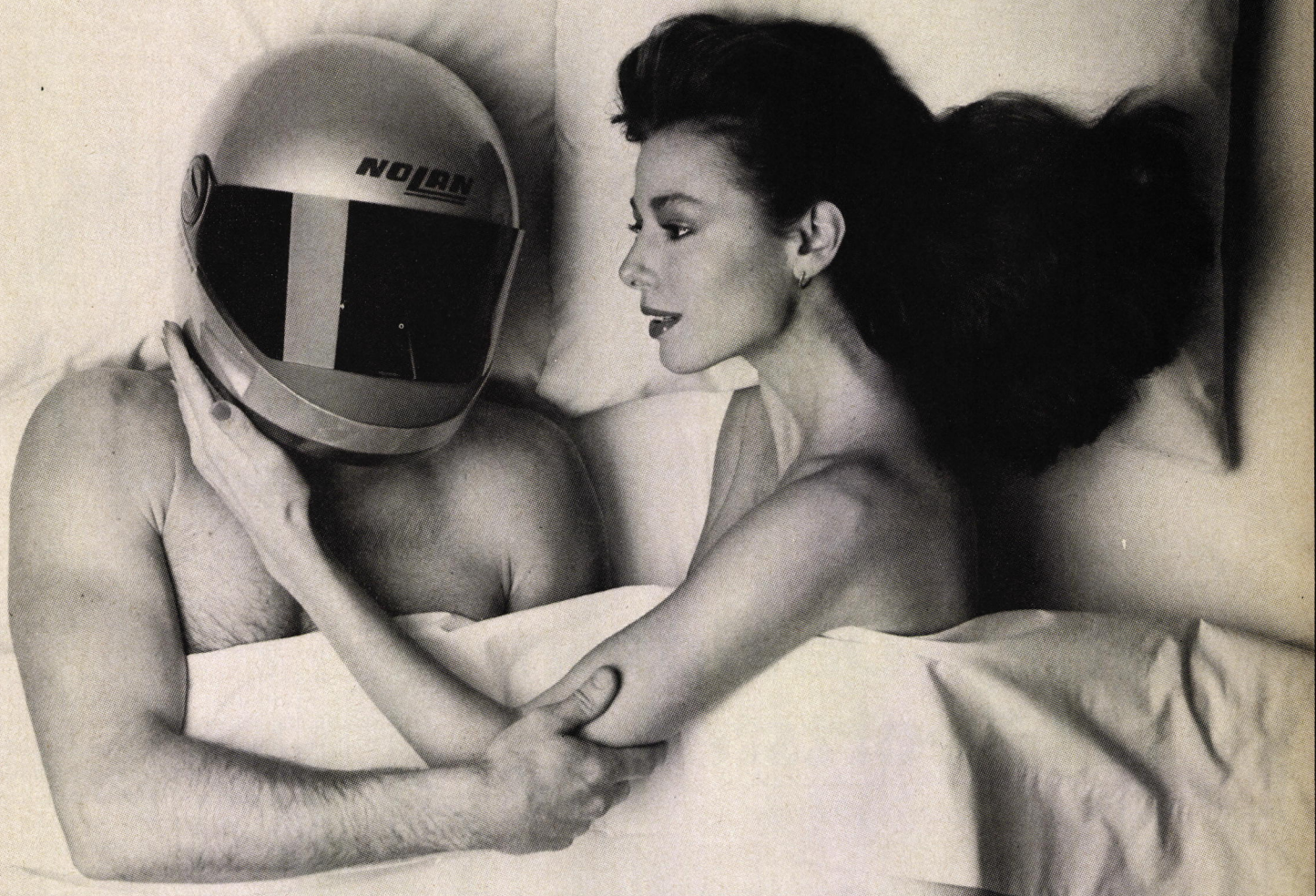
Derby Cruiser Tankbag
Manufacturer: Derby Inc., Dept. CG, 24350 State Rd. 23 S., South Bend, Indiana 46614
Suggested Retail Price: $79.95
Available Colors: Burgundy, Black, or Gray

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 GILBERT LUNA

Derby's Cruiser tankbag fits most teardrop tanks to a T

Filling an empty space in the cruiser soft-luggage market.

A man and his Nolan are not easily parted.



A Nolan man might be talked into almost anything before he'll ever be talked out of his N33.

What makes a Nolan owner so stubbornly attached to his helmet? You'll know the moment you try one on. The N33 immediately becomes a restful solitude of quiet; a haven of uncanny comfort. From that moment on, the helmet will become part of you.

As will these other N33 temptations. The luxurious Lexan shell with its sleek aerodynamic profile. The Venturi type ventilation system. Four-position, quick-change visor. And padded chin strap.

The Nolan N33. Isn't it time you got it on.

The model N33 shown here and other Nolan helmets are available consumer direct. For pricing and ordering information, please write to the address shown.

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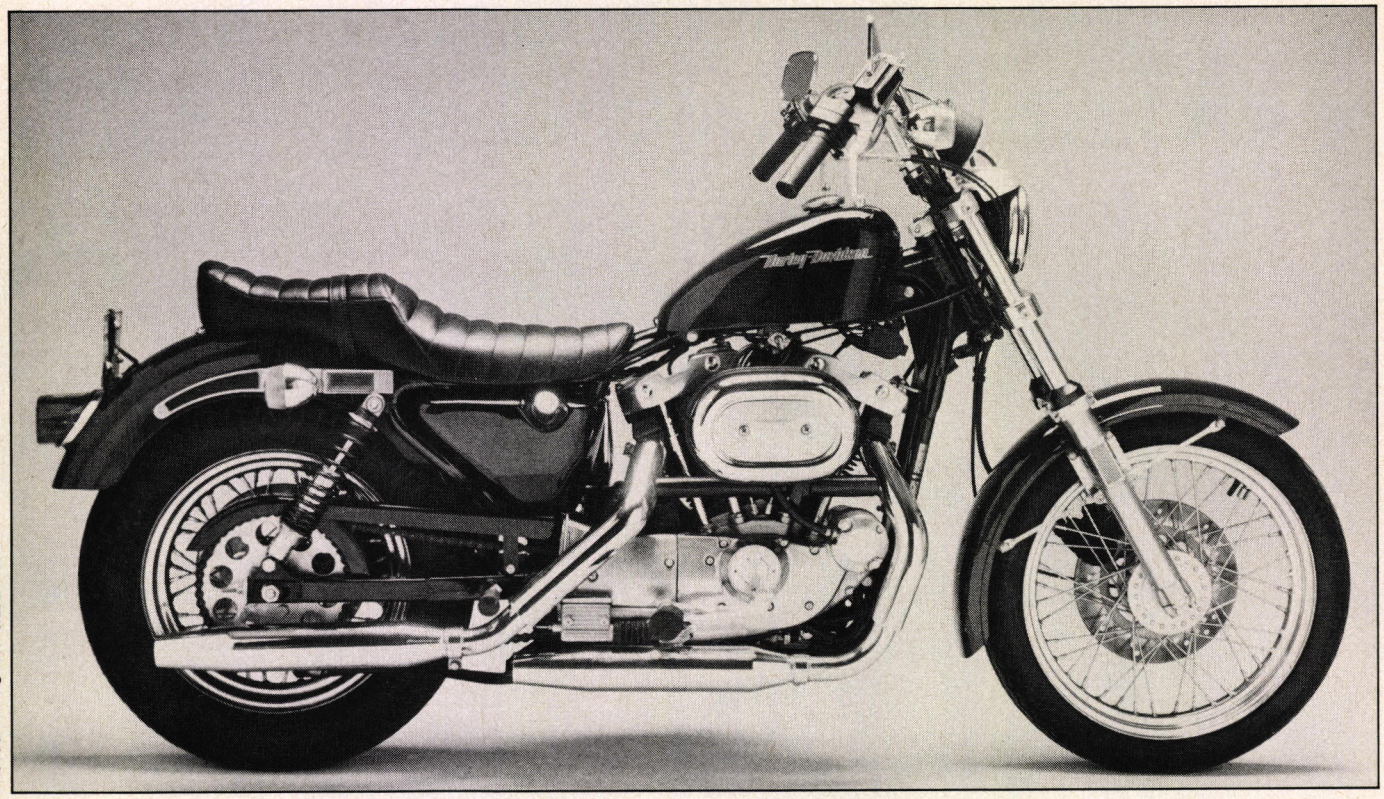


PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 GILBERT LUNA

BETTER THAN STOCK:

Harley-Davidson XLH Sportster

Bolt-on Rx for a pain in the rear.

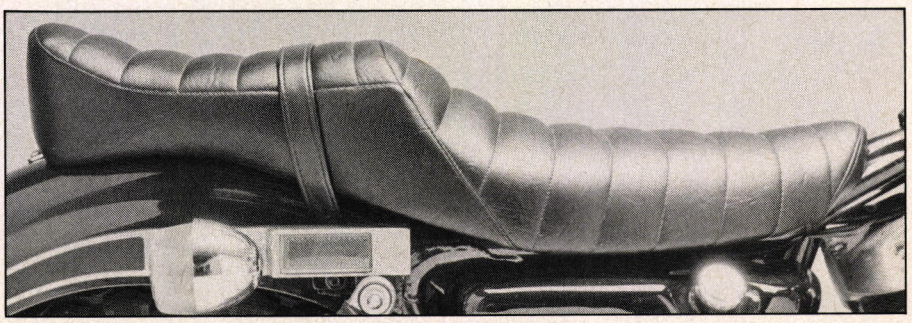
• At the ripe old age of 28, Harley-Davidson's XLH Sportster could be considered the grande dame of street cruisers. Yet there's one area in which the Sportster remains decidedly unrefined: The buckboard accommodations provided by the ultra-stiff rear suspension and wafer-thin saddle make the XLH less than genteel. Improving the ride quality seemed like a logical candidate for a bolt-on fix, so it wasn't long before we started licking our thumbs and paging through catalogs in search of relief.

The first of those catalogs was Koni's. While the major problem with the rear suspension is stiff springing, the limp damping of the stock Showas made a set of Koni externally adjustable 7610 shocks a logical choice. With a set of 87/118/146-inch/pound springs, the Konis promised to improve the XL's ride *and* handling. And that prompted us to bolt on one of H-D's Screamin' Eagle fork braces to help tie the fork's willowy 35mm stanchion tubes together more securely. Fixing the seat wasn't quite so easy, though. Our main goal was to eliminate some of the abuse meted out by the stocker, but there was one additional criterion: The seat couldn't change the Sportster's profile. Finally we settled on a Gunfighter seat from Mike Corbin, who's been reshaping saddles to fit the human anatomy for years.

Although all those fixes were supposed to be simple bolt-ons, installing the seat took a bit more time than expected, because the stock grab-strap had to be stretched to fit. Installing the shocks, likewise, turned out to be a problem, because the dampers came with 12mm eyes; those had to be drilled out to match the Sportster's 0.5-inch mounts. Koni claims later shocks will have correctly sized eyes, which will eliminate the drill-press work required in our installation.

Even with the added complication, though, the suspension work was worth it. With the Konis, the XL's rear suspension soaks up minor pavement irregularities much more effectively than in stock form. In addition, even with the shocks set on No.1 (of four) rebound damping positions, the bike feels more at ease in fast sweepers, without the wallowing the Showas allowed. Some credit for that new-found handling prowess goes to the H-D accessory fork brace; previous experience has shown that adding one is the first step in upgrading the XL's handling.

But that doesn't mean the brace, springs and shocks vault the XLH's suspension to state-of-the-art performance. Although the Konis provide a slightly longer stroke than the Showas, rear suspension travel is up

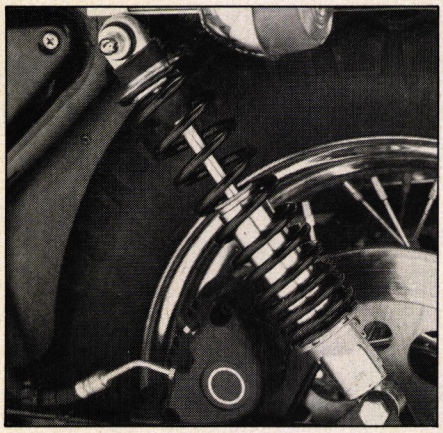


Corbin's handiwork retains the stocker's frame-hugging profile

But firmer padding takes the worry out of being close.

only 0.1 inch (to 3.1 inches), so the back end still hits its stops with butt-thumping regularity. Koni's progressively wound springs do take some of the abruptness out of the bottoming, but the sheer lack of suspension travel prevents them from smoothing the ride over large bumps.

Fortunately, the Gunfighter seat helps soothe the jarring somewhat. According to Corbin, the major problem with the stock



Koni 7610s firm up XL's handling

Shaping up for broken-field running.

seat is not its razor-thin profile, but too-soft foam, which effectively leaves the rider sitting on the seat pan when the padding packs it in. Corbin can make seats to any desired thickness, but even when using the stock dimensions, his handiwork improves matters enough that it's the bike's 100-mile fuel range—not the rider's pain threshold—that dictates rest stops.

Ultimately, then, our project was a success. It proves that you can smooth some of the Harley's rough edges so that its bone-shaking ride doesn't intrude on the bike's boulevard intent, by using a few simple bolt-ons. The fact that the changes also put a bit more sport into the Sportster makes the effort that much more successful. Sort of like sending this grande dame off for a refresher at finishing school, and having her come back a better athelete, too.

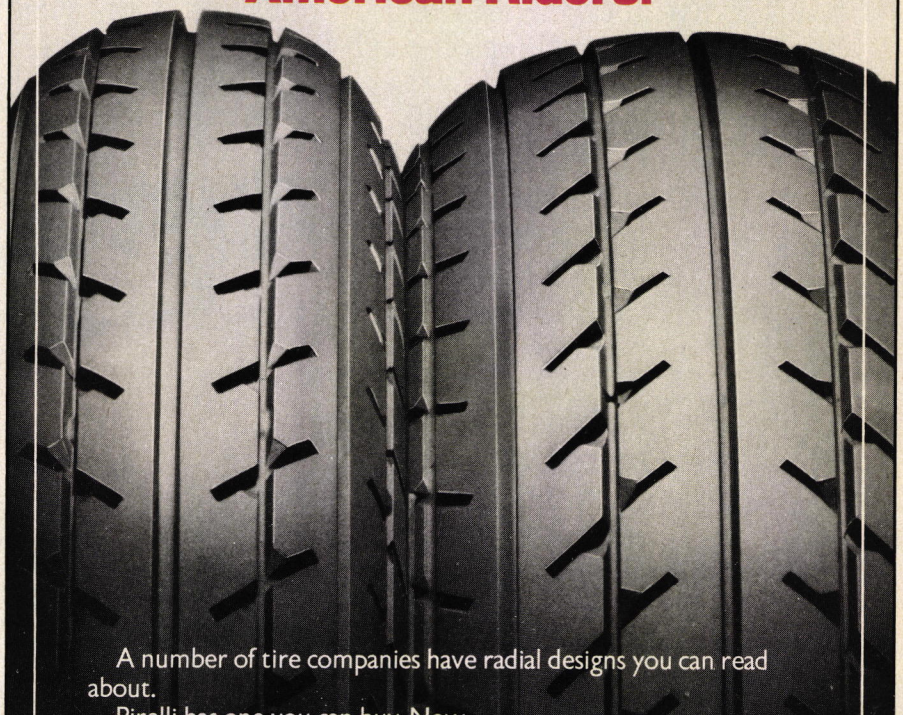
—Jim Miller

Manufacturer's addresses and suggested retail prices:

Screamin' Eagle fork brace ...$69.95 (chrome), $54.95 (black)
Available from Harley-Davidson dealers.
Corbin Gunfighter seat .....$149 (exchange)
Corbin Saddle
Dept. CG
P.O. Box 1562
123C Lee Road
Watsonville, California 95077-1562
Koni 7610 shocks $199.95
Koni of America
Dept. CG
111 West Lovers Lane
Culpepper, Virginia 22701

PIRELLI
MP7

The Only Radial-Design Tire Now Available For American Riders.



A number of tire companies have radial designs you can read about.

Pirelli has one you can buy. Now.

The new MP7, introduced in Europe a year ago, gives you the proven superiority of radial-design principles that result in less heat build up and less high-speed tread distortion. That can mean a better ride, traction, stability, water shedding, handling, braking and mileage* than conventional cross-ply tires.

But best of all, the Pirelli MP7 is here now. In sizes for many late-model street and touring bikes.

Check with your Pirelli dealer to see if he has them for your bike. And do it now, because only a limited quantity will be available this year.

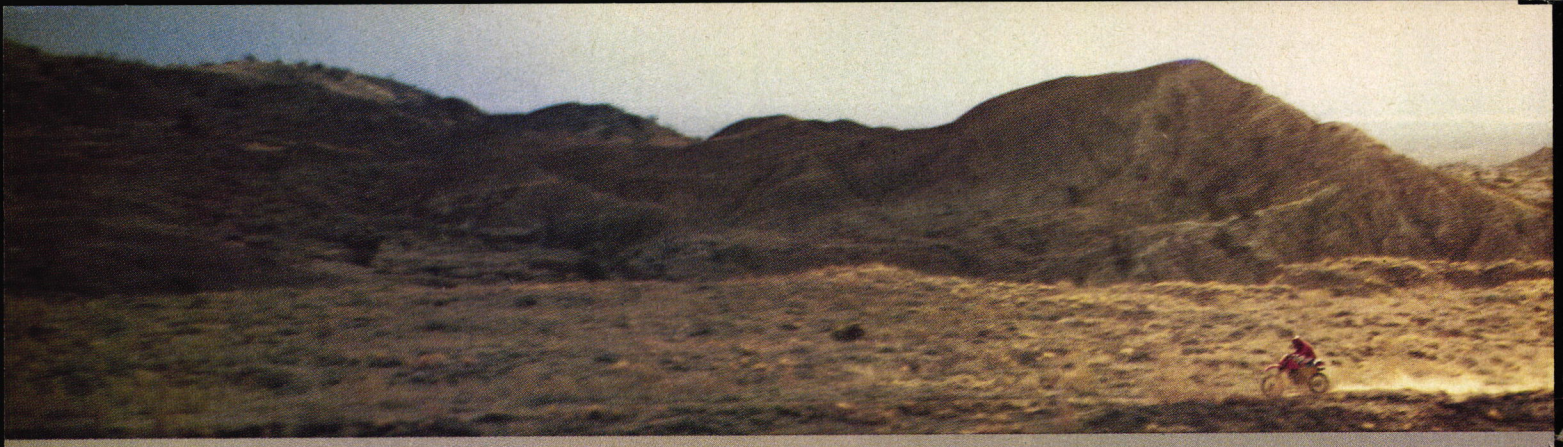
The Pirelli MP7. Motorcycling's future is here. Now.

*Since mileage figures are a function of speed, load and conditions, we cannot predict your actual mileage gains.

PIRELLI

Contact: Pirelli Tires
%Ampersand International
Dept. CG-P

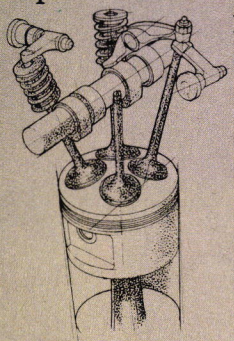
P.O. Box 421
Tenafly, N.J. 07670



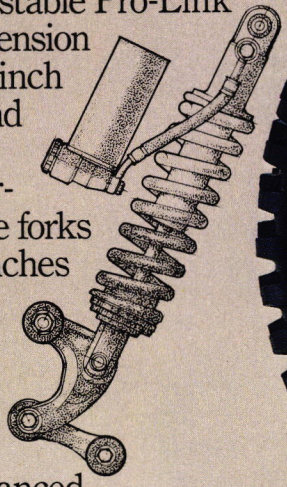
THE COMPETITION

And we can't blame 'em. Because we've got the XR600R. The most awesome, all-out off-road machine we've ever built.

It's the hottest four-stroke off-road bike around. The XR600R has a powerful 591cc dry sump engine, featuring Radial Four-Valve Combustion chamber (RFVC) and dual carburetors for instant throttle response.



There's a strong yet lightweight forged aluminum swingarm and fully adjustable Pro-Link™ rear suspension with 11.8-inch travel. And massive 43mm air-adjustable forks with 11 inches of travel.

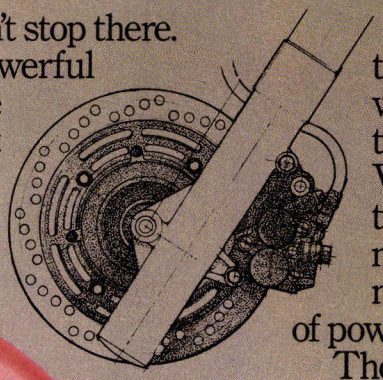


And, since the XR600R is far more advanced than other open class enduro mounts, it has a computer—an LCD digital enduro meter with clock, tripmeter, speedometer and calibration functions.

RIDE LIKE A PRO. That means using your head. And riding safely. Always wear a helmet and eye protection. Read your owner's manual carefully. Maintain your machine in safe running condition. Don't make any unsafe modifications. Ride within your skills and always use common sense. Never

HATES OUR GUTS.

But we didn't stop there. We added a powerful and responsive hydraulic front disc brake with a twin-piston caliper.



And if the XR600R is more thunder than you're used to, we've got something else—the lightning quick XR350R. Virtually all the same features and technology in a nimble, great handling enduro mount that pumps out plenty of power.

The XR600R and XR350R. So what if the competition hates your guts? Don't take it to heart. Just take it to the finish line—first.

HONDA MOTORCYCLES

FOLLOW THE LEADER

Designed for off-road, operator use only. XRs may not meet noise regulations in some states. XRs come with a six-month unlimited mileage warranty. See your Honda dealer for full details. Specifications and availability subject to change without notice. For a free brochure, see your Honda dealer. Or write: American Honda, Dept. 043, P.O. Box 7055, No. Hollywood, CA 91609-7055. ©1985 American Honda Motor Co., Inc. (5/85)

drink and ride. Ride at a safe speed. If you're riding a new or unfamiliar machine, take it extra easy. Never carry passengers. Ride with others, never alone. Respect riding area rules and take good care of the environment. Pros know that doing the right things makes riding a lot safer. And more fun.

OFF-ROAD

Monthly Proof that Man Does Not Live by Tarmac Alone

Hannah In Charge—Again

• As we mentioned last month, Bob "Hurricane" Hannah is roaring to the forefront of motocross racing again. "Hurricane" went on a rampage in Florida, where he stormed to victory at the Daytona Supercross.

But before Hannah won the race, he had a few—very few, by Hannah standards—words to share with the world at Honda's pre-race press conference. When Hannah was asked by a Honda spokesman if he had anything to add to the other riders' comments, he answered, "I'm not much for words."

Hannah wasn't so reticent after reigning at the Daytona Supercross, though. And the fact that his contract with Honda expires at the end of this season seemed to be on his mind. "Some people say this is my last year," he said. "But the fans here (at Daytona) are so enthusiastic that it's a place I really like to race. If Honda thinks it's worth giving me a bike to ride, I'll be back next year." It's up to Honda, then, whether or not the "Hurricane" will return—to Daytona, anyway—in '86. *—Dain Gingerelli*

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Oakley Factory Pilot Goggle Kit

Visual system for MX missiles.

• With all their high-altitude skyshots and double-jumps, some motocross riders stay in the air long enough to need a pilot's license. Those kinds of aerial aerobatics call for appropriate eye coverage, too, and Oakley's Factory Pilot goggles seem like just the ticket for extended air-time.

Oakley offers its urethane-frame Factory Pilot goggle as a kit, including a packet of 10 tearoffs and a cotton "flight bag" with an embroidered Factory Pilot logo. The Pilots also feature a pre-curved lens to minimize distortion, and layered, dual-density foam around the goggle's edge. A 1⅝-inch-wide elasticized strap and foam-filtered vents covering almost the full circumference of the goggles provide additional airworthiness.

© 1985 GILBERT LUNA

And in fit, comfort and ventilation, the Oakleys perform like an ace. The foam edging won't absorb as much perspiration as with some other goggles, but more important, the Pilots offer vision that's distortion-free, and the lens' rigidity, resilience and scratch resistance are excellent. Moreover, swapping a lens is a snap, and it stays secure once installed.

Oakley's "full-vision" tearoffs help keep your vision clear, too, because they cover the entire lens. The attachment stud intrudes slightly into the field of vision on the left side, and stacking tearoffs requires trimming the grab tab on the lower ones to prevent removing more than one at a time. Those are minor shortcomings, though, because the tearoffs are easy for the rider to grab and remove.

Tearoffs come standard with the Pilots, but Oakley offers a variety of options, too, including tinted lenses in regular and anti-fog, as well as a mirrored polarized lens. Other accessories include a short face-mask for use with full-face helmets, or a long mask for open-face helmets, all of which are available at motorcycle dealers.

Even without those options, though, the Oakley Factory Pilot goggles come through with flying colors. So whether your aerial artistry takes place at escape velocities or something closer to a blimp's takeoff, Oakley's Pilots will help you stay on course—clearly. *—George Wegner*

Oakley Factory Pilot Goggle Kit

Manufacturer: Oakley Inc., Dept CG, 3 Wrigley Drive, Irvine, California 92714
Suggested retail price: $29.95
Available colors: red, white, blue, black, yellow, grey, Kawasaki green, and pink.
Accessories: additional lenses ($2-$7), face masks (short $5, long $8), tearoffs ($6.50 for 10)

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 DAVID DEWHURST

TRACK TEST:

Yamaha YZ250

Production racebike with a factory-bike edge.

BY DAVID DEWHURST

• When Yamaha announced it was going to race the AMA National Championship Series with production-based MX bikes, motocross prophets predicted such machinery wouldn't stand a chance against the competition's factory specials. Yamaha didn't listen, though, and won the 250 championship anyway.

Those same race watchers then declared Yamaha's over-the-counter bikes also would lose ground to the competition, because hand-built racebikes are supposed to be *the* best place to develop new technology for production hardware. But Yamaha plans on proving the cynics wrong a second time with the latest YZ250, a motorcycle developed almost entirely from the racetrack experience of its production-based factory team.

About the only thing the race team *didn't* develop was the YZ's Brake Actuated Suspension System (B.A.S.S.). The setup links the YZ's rear brake pedal and the compression-damping valve in the rear shock's remote reservoir via a short cable. When the rear brake is applied, the cable pulls a stepped pin that reduces the preload on the compression-damping valve, thus reducing compression damping up to 11 percent. The system is designed to eliminate the usual compromise between the heavy compression damping required for high-*g*-load landings, and the lower damping rates and quick suspension action needed to keep the rear wheel in contact with the ground during braking.

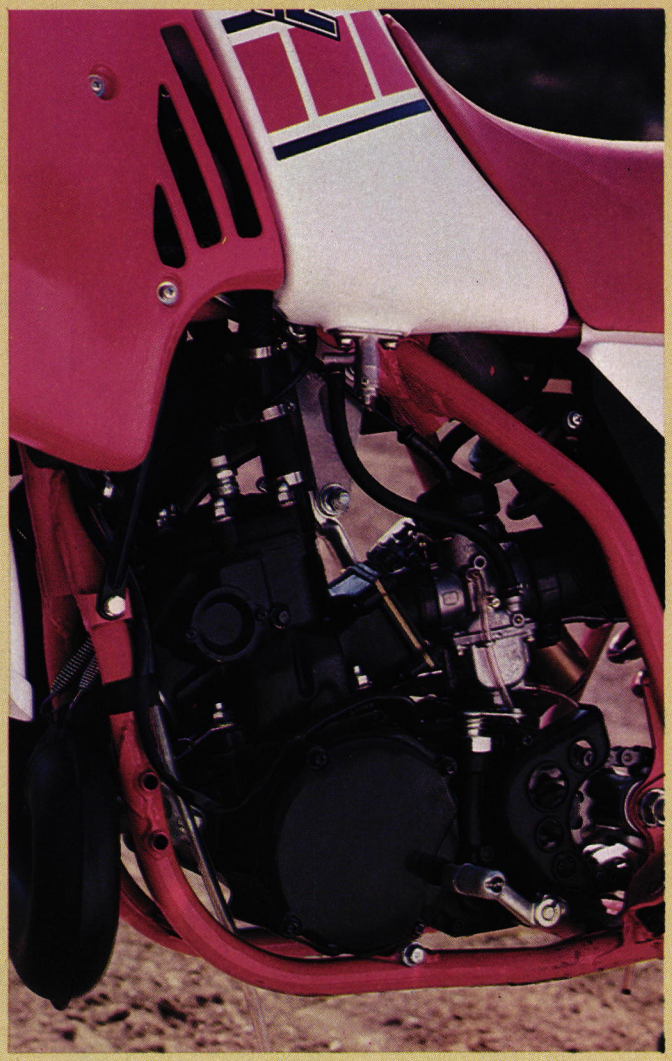
B.A.S.S. aside, the only other part of the YZ that can be called all-new—apart from its bright white-and-red colors—is a powerful and progressive front disc brake. Everything else could be considered fine-tuning to improve performance or reliability, but that understates the importance of the changes. In the chassis, for instance, Yamaha used slightly thinner tubing than in '84 to help reduce weight, and added extra gusseting in the swingarm to increase its strength. To help reduce the wheel failures that struck some of last year's YZs, the firm laced up sturdier rims with thicker Z-

Continued

YAMAHA YZ250

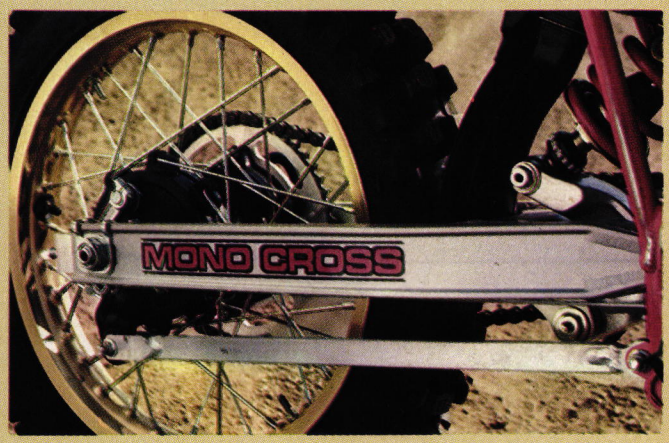
Importer: Yamaha Motor Corp. U.S.A.
6555 Katella Ave.
Cypress, California 90630

Category	motocross
Suggested retail price	$2499
Engine type	liquid-cooled two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement	one reed-valve-controlled intake, one booster intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one variable-height main exhaust, two booster exhausts
Bore and stroke	68.0mm x 68.0mm
Displacement	246.9cc
Compression ratio (corrected)	variable from 8.2:1 to 9.6:1
Carburetion	one 38mm Mikuni slide/needle
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Kayaba air-spring, 43mm stanchion tube diameter, 16-position adjustable compression damping/ 11.5 in. (293mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	Yamaha, 28-position adjustable compression damping, brake-actuated compression damping blowoff valve infinitely variable within 3½ turns of adjuster, 25-position adjustable rebound damping, 30mm spring preload range/12.3 in. (313mm)
Weight	219 lbs. (99.3kg)
Wheelbase	57.1 to 58.1 in. (1451 to 1475mm)
Seat height	37.9 in. (963mm)
Steering head angle	28.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.69 in. (119mm)
Top speed (observed)	73 mph (117 kph)
Warranty	30 days on engine, frame and suspension only
Available color	white only



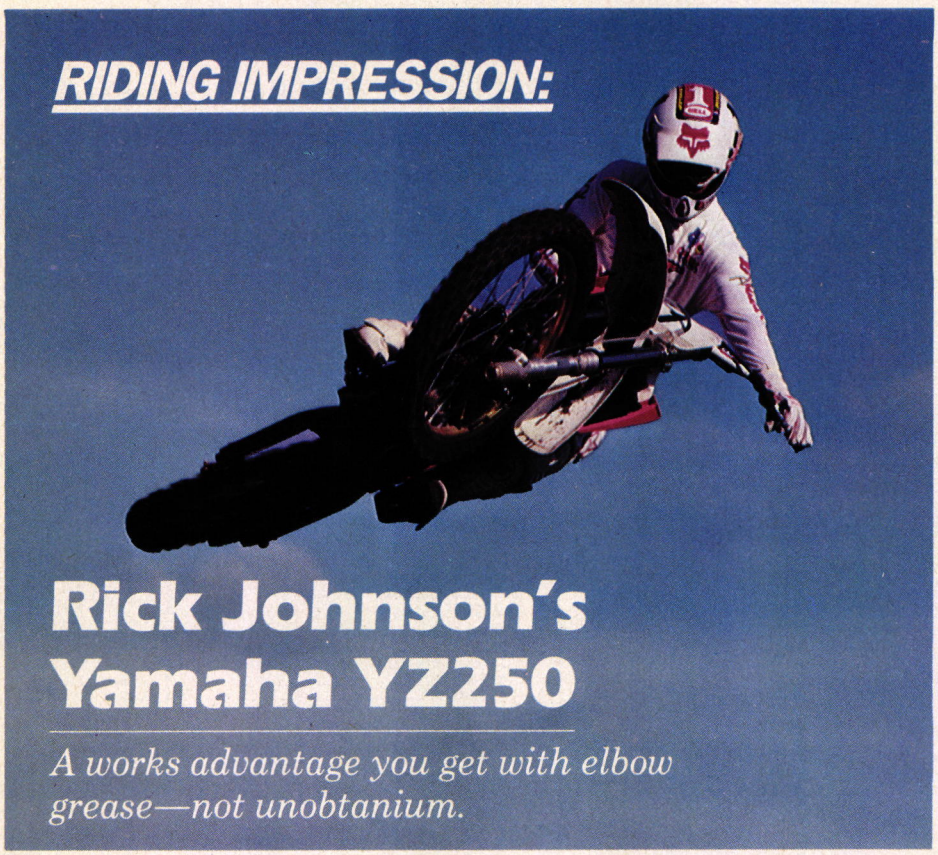
shape spokes, and steel nipples rather than aluminum.

The YZ's 247cc liquid-cooled motor received its share of attention, too. For example, the motor breathes through a larger intake port controlled by fiber reed petals, rather than the 84's steel petals. Moreover, Yamaha retimed and reshaped the transfer and exhaust ports, and enlarged the small exhaust sub-ports along with their matching passages in the power valve. Also, the motor's low-end and midrange power was punched up by reducing the cylinder-head volume. Finally, the YZ's ignition system features a revised advance curve that closely matches that of the YZ60 ignition used by factory riders last season.



Add up all that fine-tuning and you get a motor with more low-end power than last year's stump-puller, and more top-end than even the '84 factory YZs. The most noticeable improvement comes in low-speed torque; the motor snaps into action with the slightest touch of throttle, making it perfect for the tight turns and double jumps that litter America's motocross tracks. And on long straights, the YZ250 revs high and fast enough to stay up at the head of the pack.

In fact, the only thing that's going to slow the Yamaha's progress around a track is its suspension. The fork springs are soft enough for your mother's sofa, and most riders will want to replace them instantly. Fast riders might also want to change to 5-weight oil and alter the damper rods. The damping



RIDING IMPRESSION:

Rick Johnson's Yamaha YZ250

A works advantage you get with elbow grease—not unobtanium.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 DAVID DEWHURST

• Every racer knows that factory riders have it easy, right? All that trick equipment makes winning as easy as railing a berm. Wrong. Riding Ricky Johnson's "factory" YZ250 shows that the only advantage he has over other YZ-riders is a well-prepped bike and a transporter-full of talent.

RJ's bike comes right off the production line just like yours, and despite its "factory" facade, there's not a single part on it you can't buy or build. Yamaha even publishes Wrench Reports that tell exactly how to build your own factory replica. Do it right and you'll have a bike that's just as impressive as Johnson's works weapon.

Not that everything about RJ's bike is perfect for average riders. Bounce up and down on the suspension and you'd guess his wide-open riding style had seized the fork and shock. But that's how Johnson likes his suspension. And for good reason, too, because when you hit stadium-type jumps at race speeds on this YZ, the fork and shock just seem firm—not rigid. Back off for a second, though, and RJ's heavily sprung and damped Yamaha will kick you harder than a bad-tempered mule.

Johnson says that if you're fit enough to hold on at race-winning speeds, his superstiff YZ finds more traction and is essential for harsh stadium jumps. Such race-winning suspension is no more than a phone call away, too: Steve Simons can supply an exact copy of RJ's Ohlins shock, or one that better suits less talented racers like you and me. Simons also builds the Anti-Cavitator fork kit that Team Yamaha uses to get a slight increase in wheel travel and to increase the damping.

Anyone can get the suspension parts, though. What about the hand-built factory pieces that are supposed to make up a works machine? Well, RJ's bike does sport a stronger nylon chain guide machined from solid, and a special expansion chamber gives a small power boost. But Keith McCarty, Yamaha's supervisor of motorsports, says the exhaust pipe's advantage is more psychological than real. And that's the extent of unobtanium on this factory racebike.

Otherwise, if you want an *exact* copy of Johnson's YZ, you can cut down the steering stops to give 10 degrees more steering lock, buy stronger Excel rims from Takasago, and, like RJ, you might cut 15mm of foam from the center portion of the seat. Then follow the Yamaha Wrench Reports' recommendations for porting the cylinder, milling the head, carb jetting and float level setting.

Build the motor to Yamaha's specs and you'll have a rocketship with an extra handful of low-end power that comes on with all the subtlety of a baseball bat in the face. That extra grunt makes negotiating tight stadium-type turns and jumps easier, but if you don't pay close attention the power will bite you. Get on the throttle too hard and RJ's Yamaha stands on its rear wheel and points skywards—instantly.

Trying to cope with the explosive power and stiff suspension shows that factory riders like Ricky Johnson don't have it as easy as most racers think. If you don't believe it, try building your own factory Yamaha— and then see if you can beat Ricky Johnson. Railing a berm might be easier.

—David Dewhurst

rates are almost perfect, but heat breaks down the recommended 15-weight oil, and fork action deteriorates during a long moto. Changing to lighter oil and correspondingly smaller damping holes would result in more consistent damping during a long race.

Fast racers probably will change the YZ's rear shock, too, because the damping rates are borderline for really hard riding. Average riders will be able to find a combination of adjustments that works well, but the settings might be near the maximum limits of both compression and rebound adjusters. Once set up properly, though, the YZ handles quite well, with amazing straight-line stability and an ability to turn like a ricocheting bullet. Better yet, the variable compression damping provided by

the B.A.S.S. really does improve traction when braking over bumps, and seems to reduce the dreaded wheel-kicking Yamahop that's been around in varying degrees since the very first Monoshocker.

Those suspension improvements alone would be enough to make Yamaha's latest 250 a significant step forward over last year's YZ. But when you include a more powerful motor, and throw in a better front brake, the YZ250 adds up to one of the most competitive bikes in its class. All of which makes the YZ a bike you—and Ricky Johnson—can win on. And that means Yamaha has a good chance of proving the prophets wrong again—on both accounts. •

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ROAD TEST:

Honda VT1100C Shadow

Borrowing a page from Willie G's notepad.

BY JIM MILLER

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 DAVID DEWHURST

Vee-twin motors, with the off-beat cadence of their exhaust note, have always touched a chord in the hearts of American riders. There's just something *irresistible* about a vee-twin's style of power, and its sound, like rolling thunder. And in 1983, when Honda custom tailored the vee's loping tattoo into the original VT750C Shadow, the American public responded in droves. At the same time, though, Harley-Davidson aficionados were livid, because that vee-twin cruiserbike—with its H-D-signature 45 degree cylinder spread, black-on-chrome finish and laid-back riding position—represented a clear threat: a move right up to the steps of Harley's styling studios.

The Shadow wasn't the first of the Japanese vee-twin cruisers—that distinction belongs to Yamaha's Viragos. But it was Honda's 750 Shadow that really started the frontal assault on Harley's domain. Since that time, cruisers—not the hyphenated sport- and performance-hybrids, but the pure, undiluted urban trawlers—have become increasingly specialized, defining their performance almost solely within the parameters of city life. And—once again—a Honda Shadow sits at the forefront of this latest trend.

This time, however, Honda's taken the vee-twin custom formula even further, with its VT1100C, a 1099cc vee-twin that rumbles straight up to the portals and through the doors of Willie G's inner sanctum. The H-D connection is more than just visual, too. Slipping into the Honda's low-slung saddle, wrapping your fingers around the 1-inch-diameter buckhorn bars and feeling the big vee-twin chug

CYCLE
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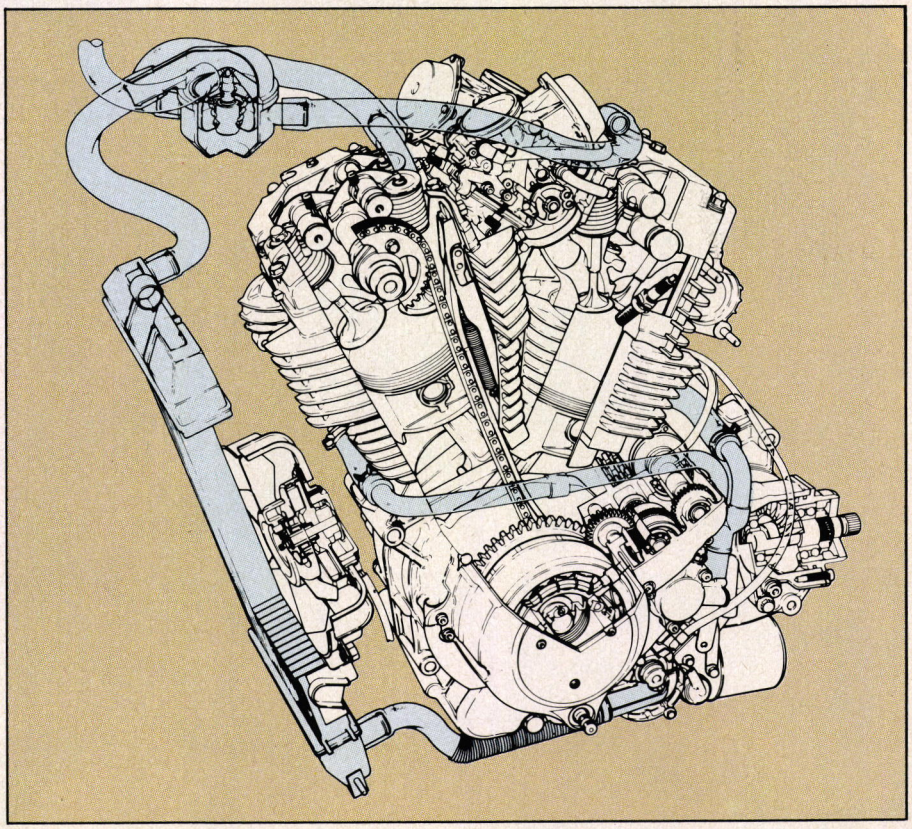
Shadow

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1985 VIC HUBER

away from idle leaves you with the undeniable impression that the Shadow's ancestry is closer to county fairs and barbeque than Kabuki theater and sushi. More important, the VT's diesel-like low-speed power delivery and whopping, 63-inch wheelbase place the 1100 Shadow head-to-head with H-D's own FX-series bikes in overall handling and feel. That familiar feel can be attributed to a particular source, too—Harley's Softail, because it served as a role model during the VT's development.

Yet despite the similarities between the two bikes, Honda insists its Shadow is aimed at a distinctly different market from H-D's. The Shadows, Honda claims, appeal to riders who want the Harley look, but aren't interested in the emotional baggage that is part of Harley ownership. But there's more than mere appearances in the VT formula. Ease of operation is one element, so the 1100 adheres to the keep-it-simple school of suspension design, with adjustments for rear spring preload and fork air pressure only. Low maintenance also plays a key role in the equation, and the Shadow fills that bill with such low/no-maintenance features as electronic ignition, shaft drive,



VT's motor follows VT750C pattern, with twin plugs and three valves per cylinder

And an H-D-signature 45 degree vee.

hydraulic valve-lash adjusters and a unique, hydraulic clutch that uses engine oil, rather than spring pressure, to supply most of the clamping force.

The VT's clutch remains similar to a conventional hydraulically actuated diaphragm-spring unit, but with an important difference: Spring pressure supplies only ⅓ of the clutch clamping force. Instead, a small piston inside the clutch hub is fed engine oil at ½ engine pressure, via a small oil passage in the primary cover. This piston applies ⅓ of the clamping force required by the clutch, and the final ⅓ is supplied as centrifugal force flings oil outward against the back of the pressure plate as rpm increases. Pulling the lever in moves the piston back to uncover three bleed holes in the hub, which allow engine oil to escape into the clutch housing. To prevent a drop in engine oil pressure when the clutch is disengaged, a small orifice in the supply gallery limits oil volume from the pump.

With Honda's design, there's a slight delay before the 1100's clutch engages fully, so a hard downshift isn't likely to lock up the rear wheel. Consequently, Honda was able to eliminate the one-way Sprague clutch used on the 700 Shadow. Moreover, because spring pressure provides only a small amount of the force needed to engage the clutch, the 1100's setup offers an extremely light—albeit slightly spongy—lever feel. At the same time, though, the unusual hydraulic actuation produces a noticeable two-stage action—an abrupt initial engagement, followed by a barely perceptible amount of slippage before the power hooks up fully. That abrupt engagement makes smooth takeoffs a real challenge on board the Shadow.

Further up the powertrain, the big vee-twin differs from the smaller Shadow in several other ways, too. While both bikes use two sparkplugs per cylinder, the 700's ignition fires its plugs every 360 degrees, whereas the 1100's ignition includes a sensor mounted on the rear cylinder's camshaft to kill the waste spark on the exhaust stroke. The system is designed to eliminate backfiring during deceleration. The big VT's ignition system also prevents its plugs from firing when the engine is turning less than 300 rpm, to prevent kickbacks that might damage the starter. As a further safeguard, a tiny clutch pack mounted on the starter shaft allows the starter gear to slip if any backfires should occur.

In most other respects, though, the two liquid-cooled vee-twins differ only in details, although they share almost no parts. In scaling up the VT motor, for example, Honda increased both bore and stroke (from 76.5mm by 75.5mm on the 700 to 87.5mm by 91.4mm) and replaced the smaller motor's six-speed gearbox with a five-speed unit. Still, in basic design, the engines are nearly identical. Both of the rigidly mounted, 45 degree vee-twins use 90 degree offset crankpins, which provide the same perfect primary balance of a 90 degree vee design. Likewise, the VT1100 breathes through three valves per cylinder, (two 32mm intakes and one 40mm exhaust, compared with the 700's 31mm intakes and 40mm exhaust) set at a narrow, 37 degree included angle, the same as on the 700. And both Shadows employ hydraulic lifters mounted under the rocker-arm pivots to control valve lash.

But the two engine families again part company at redline. While the 700 Shadow spins to an 8000-rpm ceiling, the 1100 redlines at 6500, and calls it quits at 7000 rpm when the rev-limiter cuts in. More important, the larger VT chuffs out its maximum torque at a relatively low 5000 rpm, which gives the Shadow the kind of low-end surge of power more often associated with Milwaukee vee-twins.

Such power delivery adapts well to city living, and within that concrete environment, the Shadow's motor makes in-town cruising a satisfying proposition. Aside from an annoying off-idle hesitation when cold, the vee-twin responds eagerly to the throttle, and wicking open the two 36mm Keihin carburetors provides a satisfying burst of acceleration that increases slightly as the tach sweeps past 4500 rpm. With the VT's lusty torque, a lane change or pass is as difficult as winding a watch—just a simple flick of your wrist leaves traffic far behind.

Dialing up the Shadow's throttle also raises the bike's vibration level, but never to frenetic proportions. Although Honda claims the 1100's offset crankpins provide perfect primary balance, the crank design also gives the motor a slight rocking couple, which to anyone but an engineer feels exactly like vibration. Nonetheless, at low rpm, the shaking does little more than give the VT a pleasant mechanical feel. Between 4500–5500 rpm the buzzing becomes irritating, but only through the footpegs; above that range, the amplitude decreases until the vibration fades into the background, and below 4500 the motor conveys only the reassuring machinations of an honest-to-God vee-twin.

Staying out of that buzzy range is easy, too, because the VT's torquey nature and five-speed transmission provide the option of at least three gears at any legal

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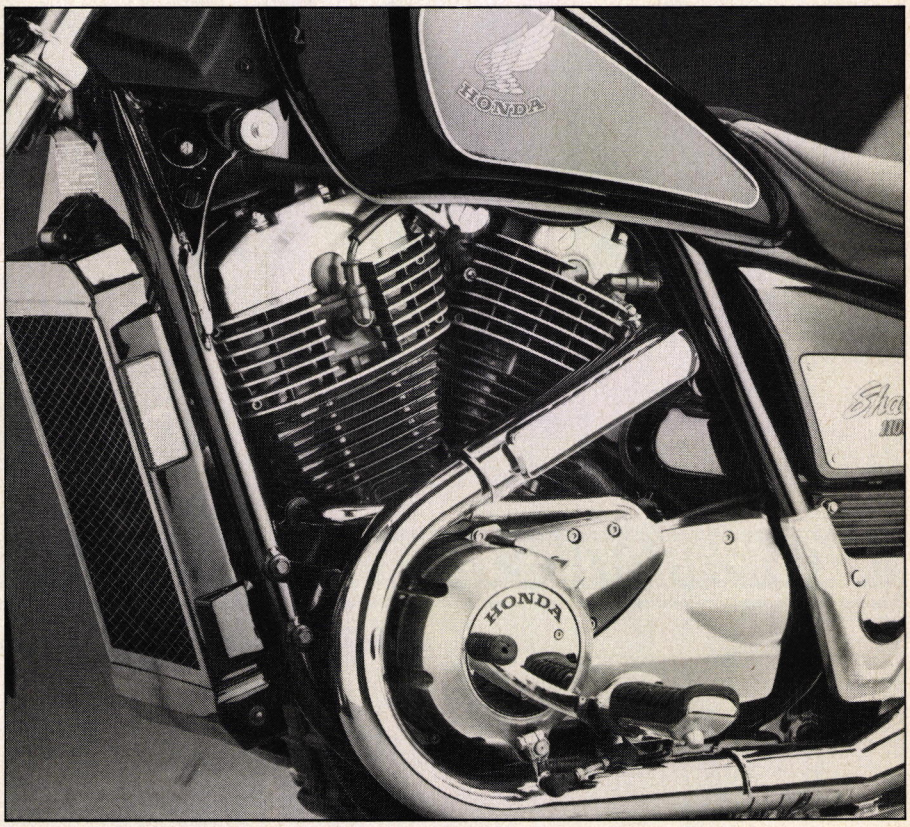


Liquid-cooled vee-twin uses offset crankpins for perfect primary balance

Bolt-on heat fins give it that airy look.

speed. During around-town cruising, it's possible to stick the VT in second, third, or fourth gear and leave it there, shifting only for the occasional stoplight getaway. On those rare times when you *do* need to shift, all it takes is a single prod at the lever; gear changes are positive, with only a hint of notchiness. In fact, the only things that intrude on the Shadow's shifting are the hydraulic clutch's spongy feel and abrupt engagement.

Almost nothing else intrudes on the Shadow's urban performance, though. For example, the VT's long wheelbase, soft springing and excellent suspension compliance pamper the rider, isolating him from most pavement flaws in the concrete jungle. Even with the Showa suspension set full-stiff (6 psi in the fork, No. 5 preload at the rear) the 1100 floats over paving irregularities like a Lincoln limousine. Likewise, the bike's wide handlebar keeps steering effort pleasingly light; combined with the VT's low *cg*, the bars make herding the big Shadow through heavy traffic much easier than its 560-pound weight would indicate. Plus, the handlebar bend, low seat height and forward-set pegs produce a relaxed low-speed riding position that's as comfortable for in-town riding as a well-worn leather jacket.

Things get a bit tight at the seams, though, outside the city limits. Even a short hop on the freeway leaves the rider straining against the wind, because the buckhorn handlebar puts him bolt upright into the breeze. The seat and pegs offer little help there, too; the forward footpeg placement and deeply sculpted two-piece saddle prevent the rider from sliding back, so he can't lean into the blast. Although the riding position is fine for cruising, the Shadow takes to the freeway like a cat to a swimming pool.

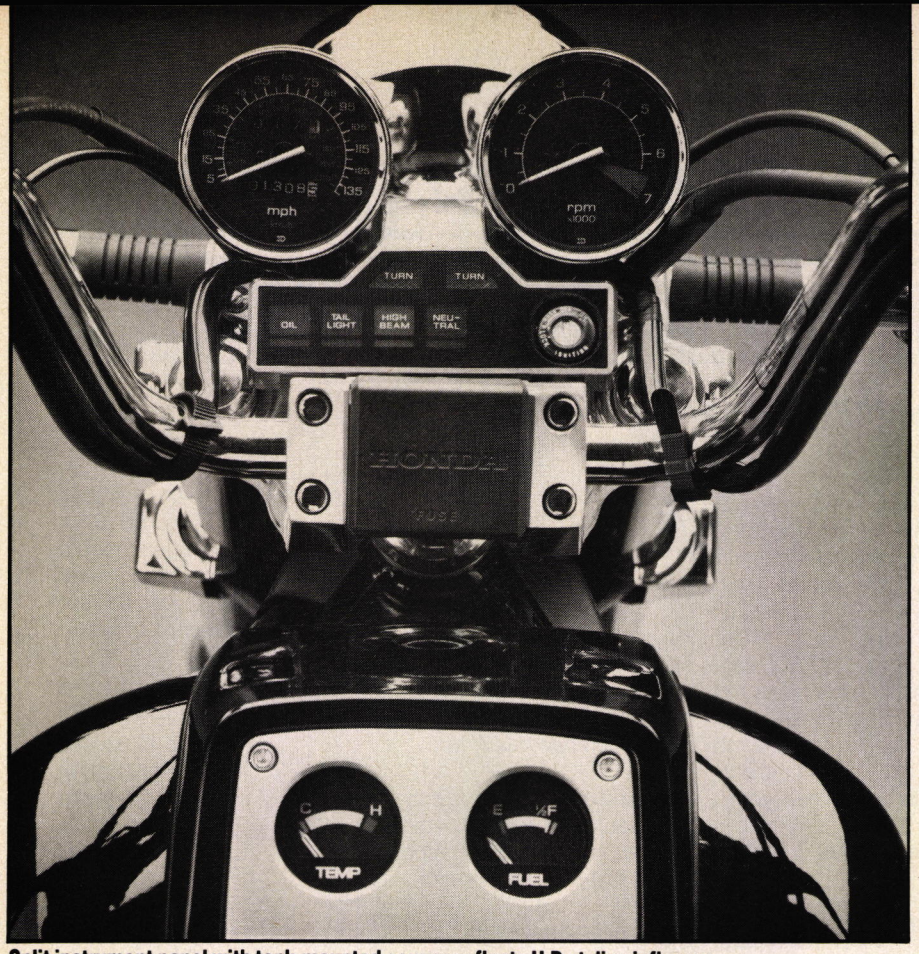
The VT's urban temperament adapts to backroading a bit better than it does to freeway travel, particularly in open, high-speed areas. There, the bike's ultra-long wheelbase, chopperesque 32 degree steering head angle and staggering 6.04 inches of trail combine with its 18-inch front wheel to make the 1100 delightfully stable. And despite a spongy lever feel, the Shadow's dual-disc front brake handles backroad charging with aplomb, its power and feel more than making up for the rear brake's numbness. A shortage of rebound damping in the shocks does cause the back end of the bike to kick up in bumpy corners, but even then the Shadow holds its line steadily.

As the road tightens up, though, the Honda betrays its city-slicker background in a big hurry, by grinding its footpegs with clock-like regularity. Fortunately, the Shadow's wide handlebar provides plenty of leverage for mid-corner corrections, and even in heavy braking the bike stays on-line. Eventually, however, you'll find yourself avoiding any mid-turn surprises by slowing the pace a bit and taking a wide line through the tight stuff.

A simpler solution, though, is to head back to town, where the VT isn't required to play the impostor's role, and its competence remains unquestioned. But the 1100 is so sharply focused that it forfeits all-around ability for its urban prowess. Still, such single-minded purpose is the current trend, and as it continues and cruiservees become more spe-

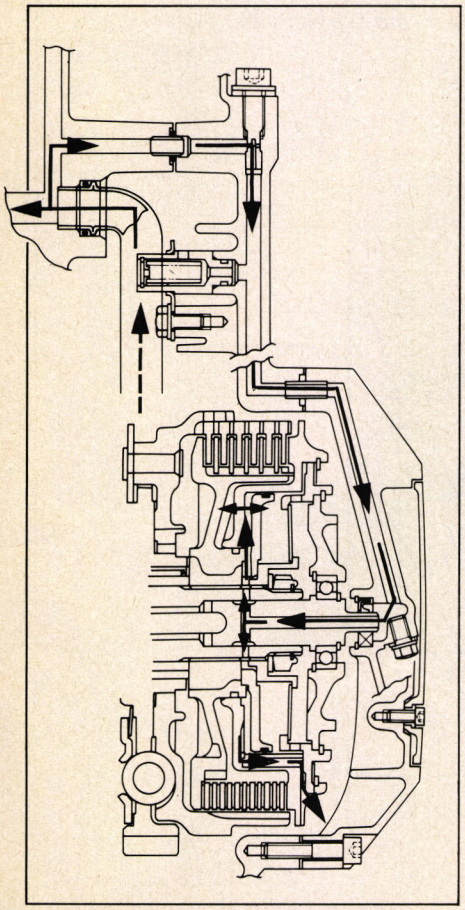
COMPARATIVE TEST DATA:

Make and Model	Quarter-Mile, sec/mph	Top Speed, mph	Weight, lbs.	Stopping Distance From 60 mph, ft.
Honda VT1100C Shadow-'85	13.022/100.33	112	560	127
Harley-Davidson XLH Sportster-'85	13.742/95.94	111	490	146
Harley-Davidson XLX-61-'83	13.459/95.94	106	488	128
Harley-Davidson FXRS Low Glide-'84	13.917/94.57	112	575	140
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	12.906/100.78	127	484	132
Yamaha XV920 Virago-'83	12.835/101.46	108	503	138



Split instrument panel with tank-mounted gauges reflects H-D styling influence

Full instrumentation, but the fuel gauge only tells half the story.



Engine oil provides clutch clamping force

With hair-trigger engagement.

cialized, the city limits become more than geographic boundaries. They define a bike's character, too, and place the greatest limitation on bikes like the Shadow.

One reason for the VT1100's one-dimensional character seems to stem from its Milwaukee role model, because the Softail is far and away H-D's most radical custom. And the VT seems like a decathlon champ in comparison to that *particular* Harley. Yet at the same time, H-D is building bikes such as the FXRS, which not only is an excellent cruiser, but a top-drawer *motorcycle* as well. So it's ironic that while the traditional customs like the VT1100C are moving closer to Milwaukee, H-D is taking its show on the road, and the two seem to be crossing paths at the city limits. Inside those boundaries, though, the Shadow is creeping over into Harley's backyard. •

Nits:

- Fuel gauge only indicates fuel level in lower tank, and is extremely non-linear as a result.
- Suede trim on seat holds water, making it difficult to dry saddle.
- Fork tubes not interconnected for air adjustment.

Picks:

- Grips are soft and comfortable.

Ride Review

• Why did Honda do it? Why in the name of Willie G. did the VT1100C Shadow have to be the guinea pig for Honda's new weird-Harold clutch mechanism? Without that one simple "feature," I could easily learn to love the VT. After all, the thunde ing vee-twin motor has everything I could ask for in terms of torque and seductive exhaust note. All the right cruiser styling licks are there, too—and tastefully done, at that.

In my book, though, a cruiserbike should make *me* look good, too. But the VT's unpredictable clutch-action undermines that goal at every stoplight and in every parking lot. It's difficult to look suave pulling out of the Tastee Freez when you have to rev the VT's motor like some 250cc two-stroke. I'd gladly adjust a cable once in a while to save myself from such egregious technology.

—Marc Cook

• I've ridden both Honda's VT1100C Shadow and its role model, Harley-Davidson's Softail, and I'm here to tell you the Honda is the superior motorcycle. In power, smoothness, ride and comfort, the Shadow has the Softail *covered.*

To me, though, that's damning with faint praise; the Softail isn't exactly a paragon of function. And it leaves me wondering why Honda didn't pick H-D's FXRS as a model. Now there's a target worth shooting at, because the FXRS shows you *can* have a functional vee-twin cruiserbike, but without the ludicrous riding position that hobbles the Shadow, and the Softail, for that matter. There's hardly another bike in Harley's entire line that forces such cruiser-caricature ergonomics on its rider. And until Honda changes that, the Shadow is just another pretender.

—Charles Everitt

• If Honda casts just one more Shadow from its assembly line, I'm going to turn into a moon worshiper. Isn't it clear to Honda that only *Harley-Davidson* can make Harley-Davidsons? The VT1100C is no more a Hawg than Honda's previous Shadows. Sure, the VT's 45 degree 1100cc vee-twin motor puts the bike in the same displacement league as a *real* H-D, but Harley-Davidson didn't earn its long-standing reputation just with brute force. No, sir. The Milwaukee Gang has—and always will have—a certain charisma and charm that you don't find in imitators, no matter how artful.

The way I see it, if Honda wants to be the leader, it had better get out of Harley-Davidson's shadow. Because otherwise, Honda's VT-series cruiserbikes will be just another band of followers; close, but no tatoo. *—Dain Gingerelli*

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS

Honda VT1100C Shadow — street

IMPORTER: American Honda Motor Co. Inc., 100 West Alondra Blvd., Gardena, California 90247

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: $4198

ENGINE

Type . . . . . liquid-cooled 45 degree tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement . . . . . .single overhead camshafts, three valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke . . . . . 87.5mm x 91.4mm
Displacement 1099.2cc
Compression ratio 9.0:1
Engine redline . . . . . 6500 rpm
Carburetion . . . . . two 36mm Keihin constant-vacuum
Air filter . . . . . .disposable paper element
Lubrication . . . . . wet sump
Starting system . . . . . .electric only
Ignition . . . . . transistorized breakerless
Charging system . . . . . 12-volt; 329-watt alternator, voltage regulator/rectifier, 16-ampere-hour battery

DRIVETRAIN

Primary drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 1.692:1 ratio
Clutch . . . . . wet, multi-plate
Transmission-to-jackshaft drive . . . . . straight-cut gears; 0.806:1 ratio
Jackshaft-to-driveshaft drive . . . . . spiral-bevel gears; 1.059:1 ratio
Driveshaft-to-rear-wheel drive . . . . . spiral-bevel gears; 3.091:1 ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.438	10.875	6.77
II	1.619	7.223	10.19
III	1.208	5.391	13.66
IV	0.929	4.143	17.77
V	0.806	3.598	20.46

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL

Front . . . . . .Showa air-spring, 41mm stanchion tube diameter/ 5.7 in. (144mm)
Rear . . . . . dual Showa shocks, 5-position adjustable spring preload/ 4.0 in. (101mm)

BRAKES

Front . . . . . .dual single-action hydraulic calipers, 10.5-in. (267mm) effective disc diameter
Rear . . . . . drum, single leading shoe, rod-operated

TIRES

Front . . . . . 110/90-18 61H Dunlop Qualifier F11 tubeless
Rear . . . . . 140/90-15 70H Dunlop Qualifier K627 tubeless

DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES

Weight . . . . . .560 lbs. (254.0kg)
Weight distribution . . . . . .47.0% front, 53.0% rear
Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) . . . . . 977 lbs. (443kg)
Load capacity (with full fuel tank) . . . . . 392 lbs. (178kg)
Wheelbase . . . . . 63.2 in. (1605mm)
Seat height . . . . . 29.6 in. (751mm)
Handlebar width . . . . . 28.0 in. (710mm)
Footpeg height . . . . . 12.5 in. (318mm)
Ground clearance . . . . . 5.4 in. (137mm), at centerstand
Steering head angle . . . . . 32.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail . . . . . 6.04 in. (153mm)
Frame . . . . . tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Oil capacity . . . . . .4.0 qt. (3.8/)
Fuel tank . . . . . .steel, 4.0 gal. (15.0/), no reserve
Instrumentation . . . . . .speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable to zero, tachometer, coolant temperature gauge, fuel gauge

PERFORMANCE

Fuel consumption range . . . . . 33 to 44 mpg (14 to 19 km/l)
Average fuel consumption . . . . . 40 mpg (17 km/l)
Cruising range, maximum . . . . . .132 to 176 miles (212 to 283km)
Cruising range, reserve only . . . . . no reserve
Speedometer error, 30 mph indicated . . . . . .28 mph actual
Speedometer error, 55 mph indicated . . . . . .50 mph actual
Best 1/4-mile acceleration . . . . . .13.022 sec., 100.33 mph (161 kph)
Top speed (observed) . . . . . 112 mph (180 kph)
Stopping distance from 30 mph . . . . . 34 ft. (10.4m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph . . . . . 127 ft. (38.7m)

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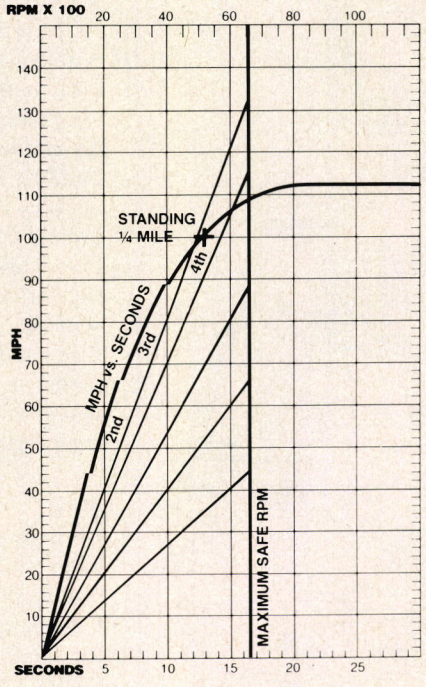

All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.

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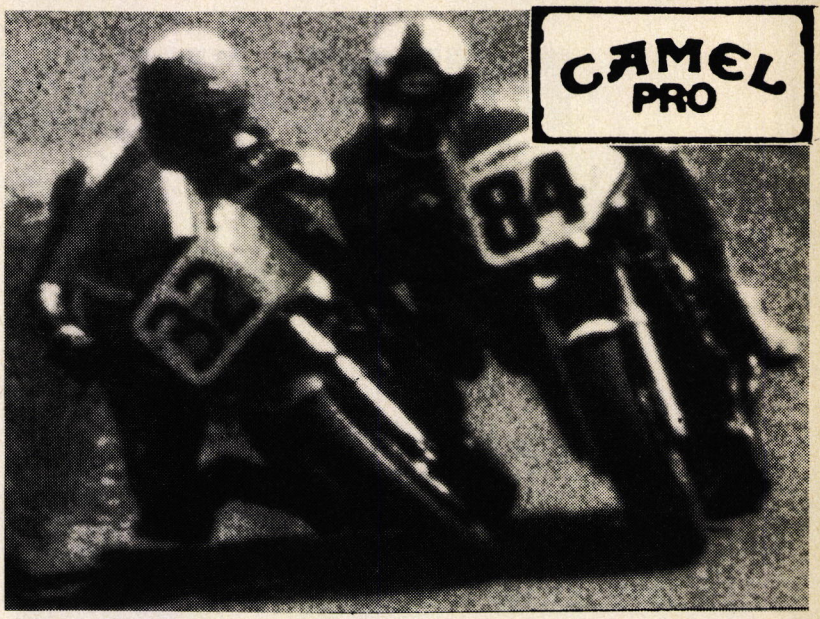

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Cycle Guide's True Tales of Racecourses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

Daytona Hat Trick

For Freddie Spencer, winning's as easy as one-two-three.

• Just before the start of the Daytona Superbike 200, Honda mechanic Mike Velasco, who had helped prepare Freddie Spencer's VF750F Interceptor for the race, made note of the lettering on the bike's gas tank. It said: "1982-83-84 Daytona Winner." Velasco pointed to the space below the three dates and said with a grin, "It's going to say '1985' right here, with stars on each side. That's a promise."

It wasn't a difficult promise for Velasco—or Spencer—to keep. Fast Freddie pretty much had the race won before the green flag even dropped for the first 200-mile Superbike race in Daytona history. In fact, Spencer had things his way throughout Cycle Week, a week in which he won three pole positions (Formula 1, Formula 2 and Superbike), and waltzed to wins in the F1 and F2 races Friday and Saturday. And, considering he's been undefeated in the Superbike class at Daytona the past three years, win number four—and three for the week—appeared to be a sure thing.

Many racers even had conceded victory to Spencer before the green flag dropped at Daytona Speedway's redesigned 3.56-mile road course. As Jeff Haney, privateer rider and third-place finisher in the 200-mile Superbike race, said before the event, "If Freddie jumps out to an early lead, he'll spend a long time by himself."

For the 200, though, Spencer fooled Haney, and almost everybody else at Daytona Speedway. After a brief unscheduled pit stop on Lap Three for a suspected misfire, Spencer found himself about two minutes behind race leader, Wes Cooley. Cooley also was riding a Honda Interceptor, but for Superteam, a five-bike team put together especially for the 200 by Daytona-native Tommy Tucker. So when Spencer rejoined

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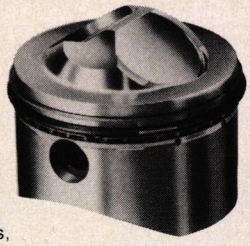

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Wes Cooley rode his Superteam Interceptor to second place

Considering Spencer's speed, Cooley's finish was a moral victory for privateers.

the race, the stage was set for the only exciting Fast Freddie Show of Cycle Week. Until then, both the Formula 1 and 2 races had been parades, processions of Spencer fast laps and race wins. Yet before the 200 miler ran its course on Sunday, Spencer had to catch Cooley, a man who had proven himself as the best Superbike racer in America in 1979 and 1980, and who was clicking off some impressive lap times while leading the rest of the Freddie-followers.

Fast Freddie's Daytona message

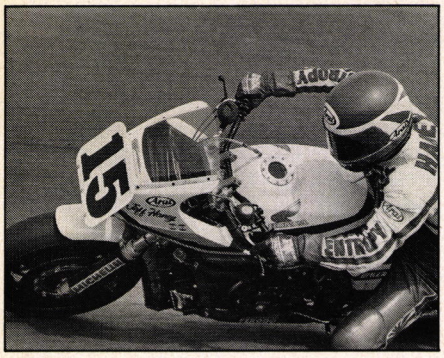
Next year you'll be seeing stars.

Daytona victory circle: Haney (third), Cooley (second), Spencer (first), and Miss Camel

When Fast Freddie turned on the gas, everybody else threw in the towel.

Continued

Even so, the pressure was on Cooley—not Spencer. Spencer had approximately 190 miles to catch him, and because the factory Honda was noticeably faster than Cooley's bike, there was little concern as to whether Spencer would catch him or not. The real question was *when*. It happened at the halfway point, Lap 28, when he blew past Cooley on the banking, making it look as if the Superteam rider had stopped to check his oil. As Cooley said after the race, "It was a futile attempt for me to try and stay with Fred. If he was turning four seconds a lap faster, three of that was motor."



Former flattracker, Jeff Haney

He did just fine on Daytona's banking.

Indeed, Spencer enjoyed the luxury of the fastest—if not the best—equipment in all three races. For example, he posted the fastest trap speeds on Daytona's 32 degree banking throughout the week: His 161.29 mph was tops of the Superbikes, the NSR500 registered 176.47 mph in Formula 1, and his new RS250-W showed a 152.80-mph top speed. By comparison, Sam McDonald posted second-fastest Superbike top speed on his Yamaha FZ750 at 159.01 mph, Mike Baldwin's RS500 went 174.75 mph on Daytona's banking, while the fastest of the F2 Freddie-followers was Englishman Andy Watts aboard an EMC at 152.28 mph.

But top speed is only a measure of a bike's ability during one segment of a lap. The fact remains that Spencer rode all week without falling, and overcame several minor—yet significant—mechanical maladies in each race: There was his pit stop in the Superbike race, one of the exhaust pipes cracked on the Formula 1 bike, and his 250 developed a leak from a cracked weld in its gas tank. As Spencer aptly put it after his final win on Sunday, "You have to go out there and race against whoever is there, and do your best. Winning is winning."

Spencer did more than win. He annihilated the competition. Mike Baldwin, four-time AMA Formula 1 champion, summed it up best after his second-place finish behind Spencer in the Formula 1 event: "I knew the only way to catch him (Spencer) was if he had a mechanical break."

But mechanical breaks weren't part of the program. Only winning was. Winning like Daytona Speedway has never seen before.

—Dain Gingerelli

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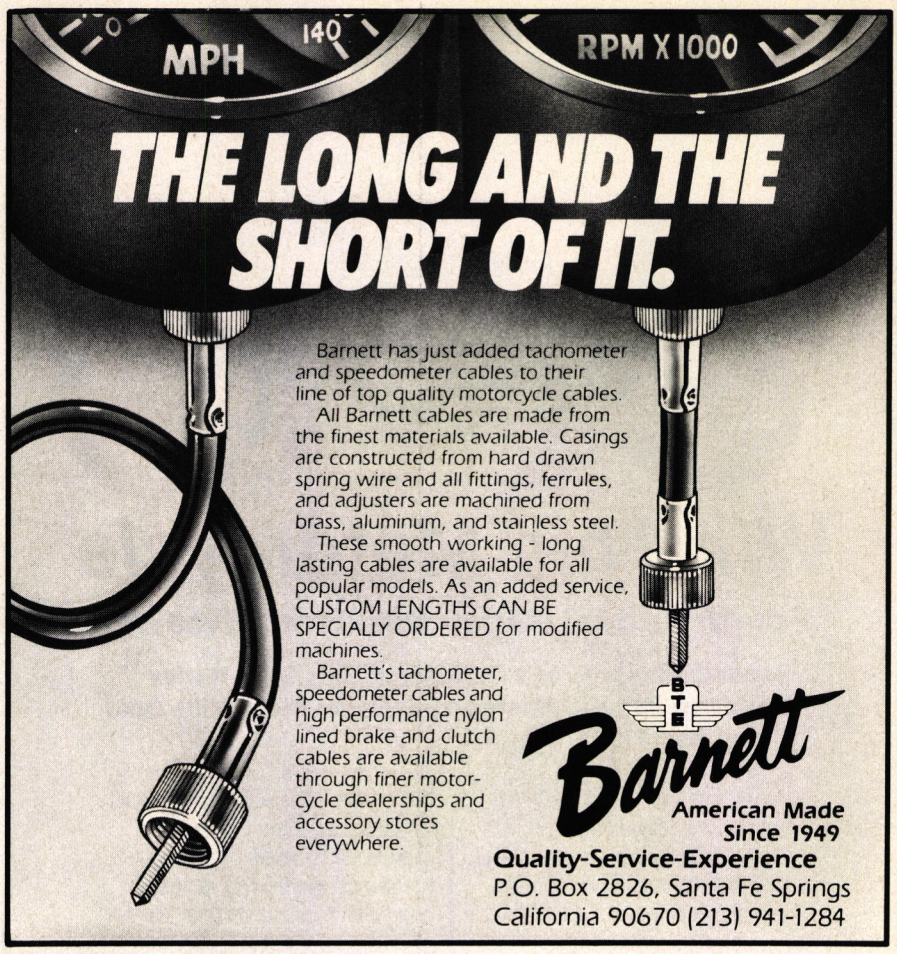
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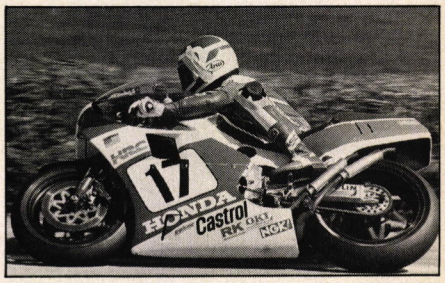
ROADRACING:

Honda's Weapons for '85: RS250 and NSR500

Brothers under the skin.

• When Honda introduced the NSR500 last year, it turned the motorcycle world upside down. And Honda did so by turning the NSR upside down—after a fashion. The NSR had its fuel tank situated below the two-stroke vee-four engine, and its four expansion chambers snaked above the motor, underneath a fiberglass cowling. It was an innovative design, but unfortunately unsuccessful in many ways, much the same as Honda's ill-fated four-stroke vee-four-powered NR500 GP machine. So, once again, it was back to the drawing board for the Honda Racing Corp. engineers. And when the new NSR made its debut at Daytona, one Honda mechanic said, "We've reshuffled a few things. They put everything in the right place this time."

The engineering team didn't have to look hard to find the right places, either. They simply reviewed the blueprints for the new RS250-W—a motorcycle Freddie Spencer will ride in this year's 250 GPs—and decided the quarter-liter machine's layout should work equally well for a 500cc GP bike. But perhaps the real irony in tracing the current NSR's bloodlines is that the RS250's heritage lies with Honda's NS250R *streetbike.* Spencer indicated at Daytona that the RS250 descends directly from the NS250R, and that the NSR500's frame is



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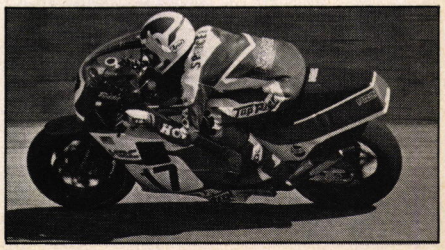
NSR500 got a 1985 facelift

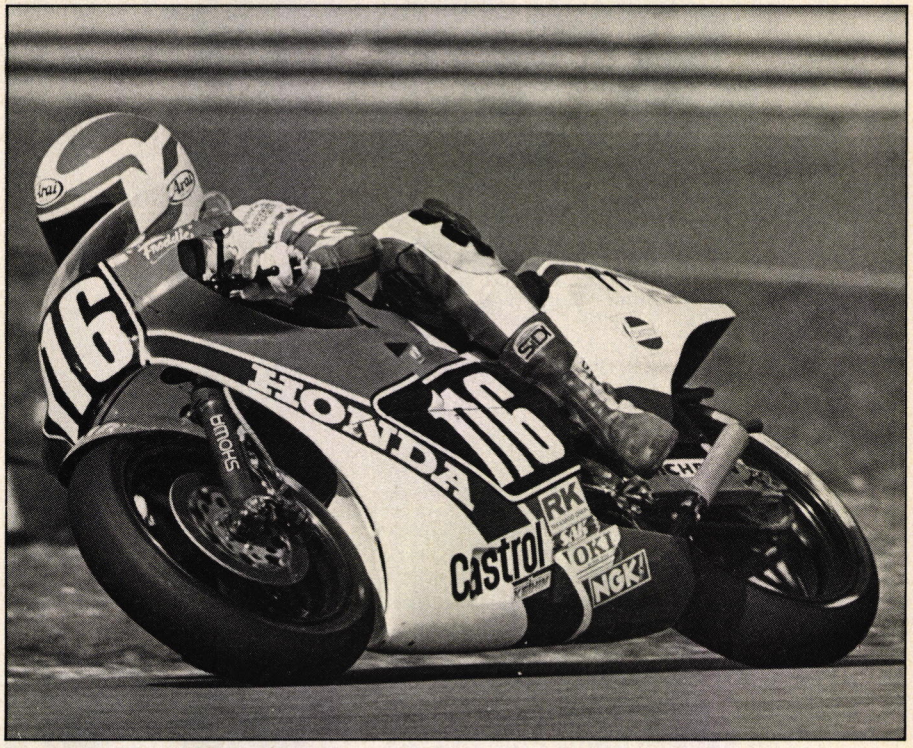
Patterned after the little RS250.



similar to the RS250's. "The new 500 is somewhat off of the 250," he said. "The frame and chassis were designed from the 250." And development of all *three* bikes was a result of Spencer's input.

A look at the two racebikes' specifications confirms Spencer's words, too. According to Honda, both engines are equipped with the firm's ATAC system (as is the NS250R), the overall width for both bikes is 600mm, and the NSR's wheelbase and overall length are only 1.5 inches more than the RS's figures. The 500's motor, however, has case-induction reed valves and develops more than 140 horsepower, while the 250 uses piston reeds and produces half the horsepower of the 500. Spencer's comparison of the two bikes? "They're like brothers," he said.

It's aboard Honda's two brothers that Freddie Spencer hopes to win multiple world championships this year. Honda is especially serious about taking back the 500 title from Yamaha, and has two NSRs in Europe for Fast Freddie to choose from, "and there are two more in Japan," said Spencer. Quadruplets, in other words. Obviously, then, Honda's GP effort for 1985 amounts to a tightly knit clan—one that could make winning a pair of world championships a family affair. —*Dain Gingerelli*

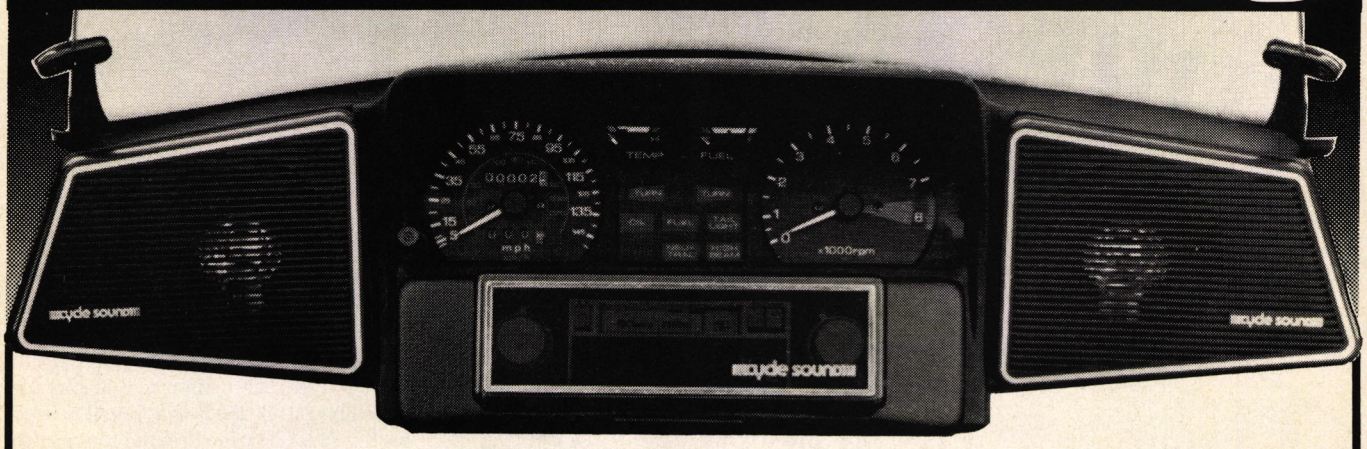


Spencer and his RS250 won their first race together at Daytona Speedway

Two weeks later, the duo won the South African Grand Prix.

Continued

Seeing Is Believing



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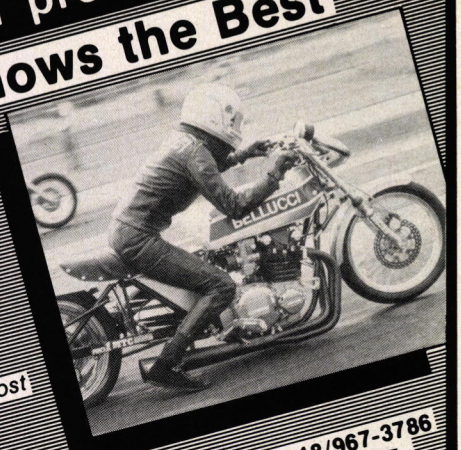

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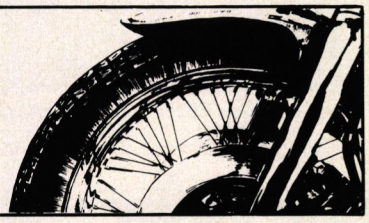

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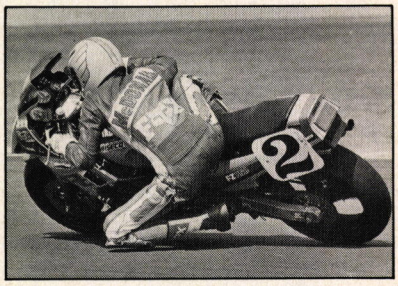
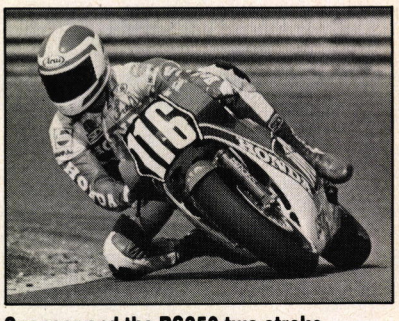


Sam McDonald and his Yamaha Superbike

"He likes to be watched."

• McBrothers: What does it take to get former AMA F2 champion Sam McDonald fired up and hungry to qualify for the Daytona 200? His brother, Phil, that's who, Team Honda's technical consultant for customer services. During time trials, Phil stood near the start/finish line and watched his younger brother qualify his *Yamaha* FZ750 for the outside of the front row for the 200. Afterward, Phil said, "Sometimes you have to prod him a little to make him go fast; he likes to be watched."



Spencer and the RS250 two-stroke

Prelude to a turbo four-stroke?

• More than just hot air: According to an article in the British Motor Cycle News, Honda has plans to build a 250cc *four-stroke* roadrace machine for 1986. According to MCN, the engine will be based on Honda's ill-fated NR500 vee-four, which featured oval pistons and eight valves per cylinder. But the big news about this 250 is that it will be *turbocharged.* Look for Freddie Spencer to ride it in the 1986 250cc Grands Prix.

• A word about winning: Freddie Spencer, former 500cc world champion, wants his title back—badly. After his victory at the Daytona 200, he said about this year's Grands Prix, "It's going to be very competitive at first; I'm going to want to win it back, Eddie's (Lawson) going to want to keep it, and Raymond (Raymond Roche, Lawson's new teammate) wants to win it." Stay tuned.

• The Final Mile: And *if* Spencer wins it again, he plans to return to America—to

race. "If the world championship goes as planned," he said, "I'd like to race a Mile at the end of the season." Now *that* would be interesting.

• The Best goes West: Defending World Champion Eddie Lawson has plans of his own for racing in America, this time at the Laguna Seca roadrace National, July 14. Lawson didn't compete at Laguna Seca last year because of testing-schedule conflicts, and feels cheated out of a good time. "I *don't* want to miss it (Laguna Seca) this year," he said. The fans would miss him, too, because Fast Eddie is one of the most spectacular riders to watch at Laguna, especially when he's sliding a bike sideways out of Turn Nine.

Lawson winning the 1984 world title

With no plans to miss Laguna.

• But they don't go East: Americans didn't get to see their new world champ at Daytona this year, either. Yamaha didn't have an official entry in any of the Daytona roadraces, so Eddie Lawson was a no-show. But as Cycle Week drew near, and Yamaha finalized plans to debut the new FZ750 Superbike *unofficially,* talk at corporate headquarters in Japan focused on putting the former AMA Superbike champion on the new racebike. The rumor was confirmed by Bell Helmets (one of Lawson's sponsors). A Bell spokesman said Yamaha had requested a helmet in Lawson's size, to be painted in the FZ's color scheme. The order was rescinded later, and Lawson stayed home.

• FIM Superbikes: The FIM is dragging its feet on making Superbike an international class. A working group has been appointed to study class rules this summer, and its recommendations won't be given to the FIM congress until next autumn. The final step would be to implement the rules, with a full world championship class as early as 1987.

• Superstock Superbike: While the FIM and AMA are rehashing their Superbike rules, the English have laid plans for their own series. It's the 750 Pro-Am Se-

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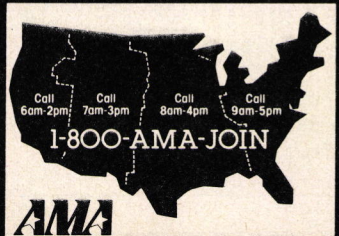

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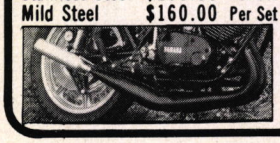

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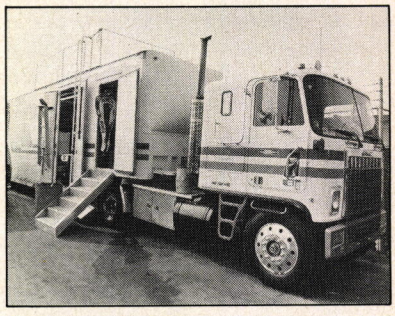
Pit Bits

ries, and will see 750cc four-stroke and 500cc two-stroke streetbikes competing. Basically, the rules allow for fewer modifications than the AMA class, and all bikes *must* use slicks.

• Semi-Factory Team: At Daytona, every racer on a Honda was part of American Honda's factory team. To provide parts for its customers, Honda had a semi-tractor/trailer parked in the pits, chock-full of



Honda's mobile race parts store

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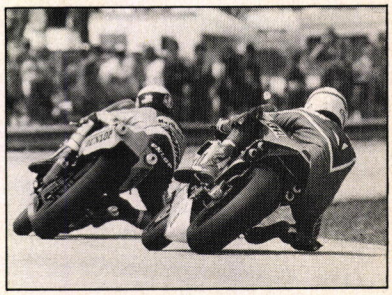
hardware for sale to privateers. Chances are the rig will be at all— or most—AMA National roadraces this year.

• I'd rather eat worms: For only the second time since 1970, three-time Daytona 200 winner Kenny Roberts failed to make it to Cycle Week. Roberts has retired from racing, but he's made no secret of his distaste for "streetbike" racing—his term for Superbikes. When Ken Clark, Yamaha's race director, was asked why Roberts wasn't at Daytona to watch the inaugural Superbike 200, Clark replied, "Are you kidding? He'd rather stand in the middle of Loudon (racetrack) today than be here, just to make his point."

• Quote Department: But Kenny Roberts was missed at Daytona by more than just the spectators. Daytona triple-winner, Freddie Spencer, who had an easy time winning every race he entered at the speedway this year, said this about Roberts: "It's difficult without Kenny here. I have to say I enjoy racing against Kenny." —*Dain Gingerelli*



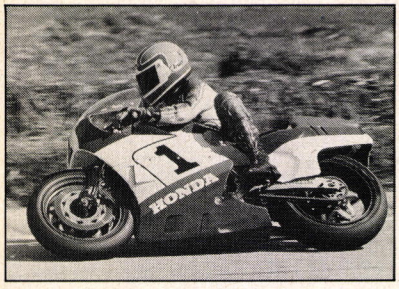
Spencer and Roberts in close company

The brotherhood of speed.

Winners & Losers

Mike Baldwin: Privateer

He's back in the low-rent district, and loving it.



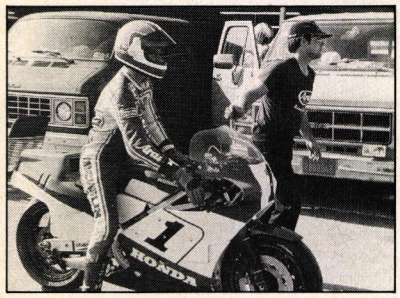
At Daytona Mike Baldwin was No. 1

Now he's in Europe, looking for fun.

• Based on his record, you wouldn't think Mike Baldwin had anything to prove about racing to anybody. He's won more AMA roadrace championships than any other rider, and with 13 AMA National roadrace wins under his belt, his score is second only to Kenny Roberts'.

But Baldwin *is* out to prove a point—only this time to himself. He wants to reaffirm that roadracing is fun. And if that desire seems a little unusual, understand that as a factory rider for American Honda the past three seasons, Baldwin has had little fun racing. To be sure, he won plenty of races in that time—11 to be exact—but to hear him talk, there wasn't much joy during those three years with Honda.

"Being associated with American Honda hurt me," Baldwin said. A contradiction in terms, considering his



Maas and Baldwin at Daytona

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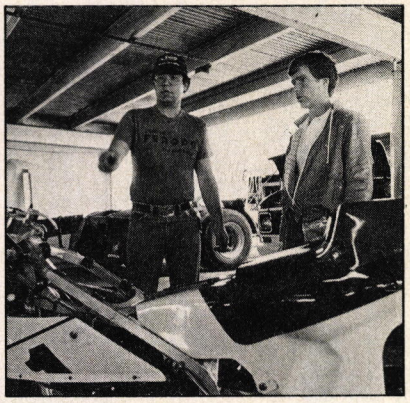
Continued

Winners & Losers

winning ways? Perhaps, but Baldwin believes he was slighted as a rider *and* as a person, particularly by the American motorcycle press, simply because he was part of the massive American Honda roadrace team. "Here was this big team—so people felt—squashing all the little privateers," Baldwin said. "It just looked unfair."

Maybe it was a little unfair. But Baldwin points out that his RS500 was just like those sold to privateers. "If you look at our bikes, you'll see that mine was no different than anybody else's. The bikes were fast, but everybody figured I should win just because I was well-paid and had the best equipment from Honda," Baldwin said. "What they failed to realize was that I had probably the best mechanic with Phil McDonald, and I like to think that I was the fastest rider. I had a good tuner, someone who knew how to build a fast and reliable engine." It's an age-old combination that any championship effort needs in order to win. Baldwin found that out early on when he and American Honda failed for two consecutive years to win the AMA Superbike championship against Kawasaki, which fielded a factory team with only a fraction of Honda's resources.



Bruce Maas will prep Baldwin's bikes

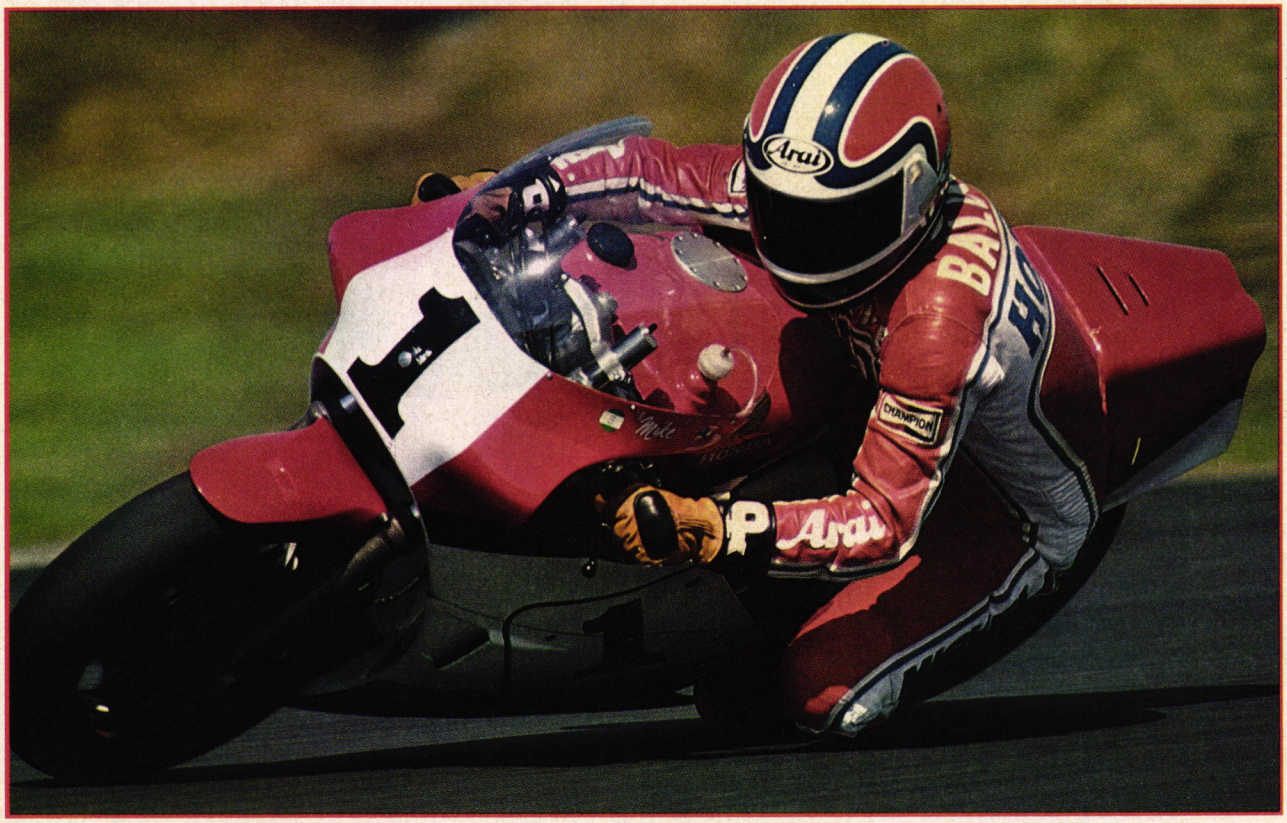
Low-rent district roommates.

Baldwin's—and Honda's—loss to Kawasaki those two years showed him clearly that factory power is no guarantee of victory. "The factory teams are just an illusion," Baldwin said. He believes most of the factory-team personnel could win with or without works support simply because they know how to prepare their equipment better. "The factory guys (mechanics) could take the same bikes that the privateers have, and still win. They have to prepare their bikes the same way privateer riders do. You could stick the factory guys in the same garage with the privateers—the low-rent district if you want to call it that—and they're still going to win the race."

It's Europe's low-rent district that Baldwin will reside in this year, though. He'll campaign—as a privateer—a pair of RS500s in the world championship Grands Prix. He has only one mechanic, Bruce Maas, to prepare his equipment, and they'll both travel to the GPs in Baldwin's small transporter. "It's a big gamble for me racing in Europe this year," Baldwin said. "It would be easy for me to stay here (race the AMA circuit again) and make easy money. But I want to go to Europe. I want to race and have fun."

Yet Baldwin wants to *win,* too. And he's got the right attitude to match that desire. As he said shortly before he left for Europe after his second-place finish in the Daytona 100 last March, "It doesn't matter if your truck is bigger or smaller than the next guy's. It's what goes on the track that counts." In the case of Mike Baldwin, four-time AMA Formula 1 Champion, he wants to put the best bike—and rider—he can on the racetrack this year. And in the process, he wants to have some fun.

—Dain Gingerelli ●



Mike Baldwin, privateer, plans to take his act on the road, searching for fun on the Grand Prix tracks of Europe in 1985

A fact-finding tour he hopes will end in victory circles—everywhere.

LETTERS *Bravos, boos and ballsy insight.*

NO FUNNY STUFF

Please don't do jerky stuff like "Motorcycles Against the World," in your April 1985 issue. Worse than just a failure to be funny, this gets in the way of the rest of the magazine.

I buy CYCLE GUIDE because the articles help me make informed buying decisions about motorcycles and accessories, keep me up to date on legislative matters that affect my right to ride, help me care for my bike, and help me develop the skills and habits that will keep me from being run over in traffic. Up to now, CYCLE GUIDE has been that kind of magazine.

Michael E. Mottner
Beaverdam, Virginia

PAR EXCELLENCE

My congratulations. You have exceeded my expectations in finding excellence from cover to cover. I refer to the April issue "Motorcycles Against the World"—a long overdue look at a very important problem, namely the motorcycle vs. the sports car.

William R. Myers
Denver, Colorado

FALLEN STAR

Very bluntly, the April issue was ruined by "Motorcycles Against the World." This wouldn't have been the case if it had been an inside feature instead of the cover story. Every other article was unbiased, informative and entertaining, especially Steve Thompson's "Late Braker" and the excellent "Superbikes on Steroids." It's a damn shame an imbecile article like the cover story ruined an otherwise stellar issue.

Phillip Garris
Triangle, Virginia

SENSE-A-BALL MEANING

In Charles Everitt's Kawasaki Eliminator article (April 1985), he apparently is under the impression that "balls out" and "balls to the wall" have something to do with private parts. I believe their origins may make you feel free to say them, even in front of your mother.

Turn-of-the-century engines had little speed-sensing mechanisms with weights shaped like balls. At rest and low speeds, they hung down, but as rpm increased, centrifugal force caused them to extend outward. "Balls out" means the engine is running fast. With a little imagination, "balls to the wall" probably means running balls out.

Next time, I hope these expressions don't conjure up obscene images of a rider with his private parts dangling on the saddlebags or having a a bad encounter with a pit wall.

Walt Trygstad
San Juan Capistrano, California

What makes you think he didn't get them from his mother?—ed.

MISTER ED TO YOU!

I've been reading motorcycle magazines for over 20 years. I always enjoy reading the letters to the editor. There's one thing that's been bothering me, though. Who is this Ed? He's answered every question ever asked in every magazine. I even saw his name in a 1926 Ladies Home Companion. Must be an awfully old sucker, too. And where the hell does he get all his information? He can't be all that smart because he sure gives some dumbass answers in your mag and then signs his name to 'em.

Ernie Franklin
Florence, Arizona

But look what I have to work with—ed.

TEMPERATURE'S RISING

After reading the letter from the "55 Club" in your May 1985 issue, it took nearly five minutes for my blood pressure to return to normal.

I wonder just how much the federal speed law has to do with their organization? It seems their main concern is regulating or even eliminating motorcycles.

I could go on at great length about how terribly uninformed these people are about the vast majority of motorcyclists and how most of us are respectable members of society, but I won't waste my time.

"55" obviously stands for the IQ required for membership.

Mark A. Kaiser
Huntington Beach, California

SEEING RED

I thought this was 1985 not 1955! (Maybe that's why your club is called 55.) I sincerely think you people would be very comfortable living in Communist Russia where *everything* is restricted.

I resent being called a clown just as you would resent being called nurds. My body is not tattooed. And as far as leather, it sure helps when that little old lady in a Caddy knocks you off your bike. I purposely have a loud bike because if that little old lady can't see me, she might hear me.

If ya'll want to do something constructive, get the drunks off the road. You might as well give up trying to change motorcycles and their riders. We are here to stay!

Dean G. Lopez
Breaux Bridge, Lousiana

Continued

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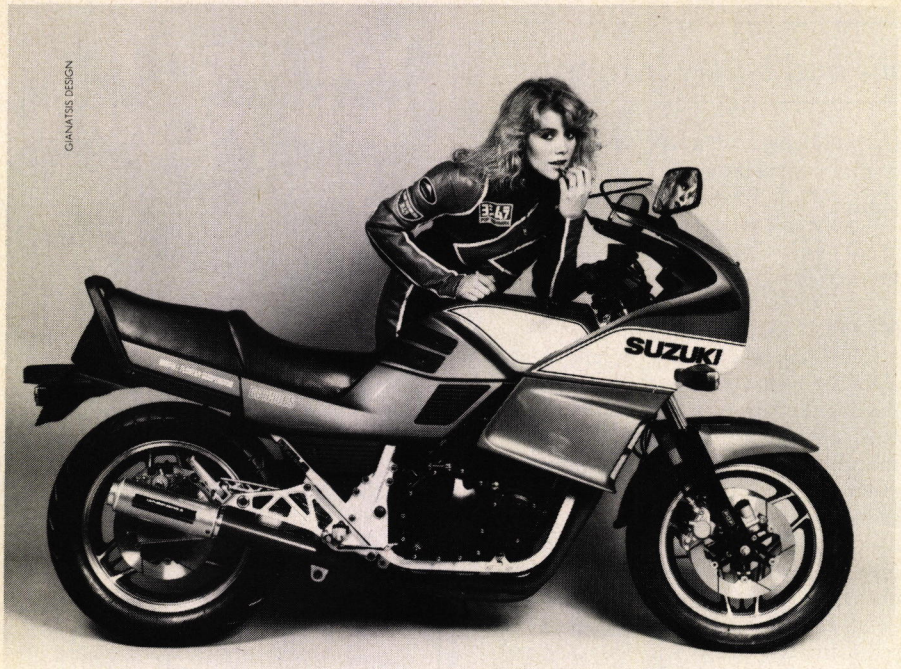

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LETTERS *Continued*

PERSONAL CHOICE

In your May 1985 issue, I came across a letter from the 55 Club. Why do we need laws to protect us from ourselves? Those needing government involved in every phase of their lives should charter a boat to Russia; then they can have all the law and order they want.

Whatever happened to freedom of choice? We need less government in our lives. I should be able to decide if I want to wear a helmet or a seat belt. A seat belt law is coming to Pennsylvania, I hear. If so, can another be far behind? Maybe they will outlaw motorcycling because it's too "risky." Or deem mountain climbing too dangerous. Or football too rough, or.... Can't you see what is happening?

And to the 55 Club: Take a radar gun to a major highway and see how many supporters of the double nickel you have.

Tom Welcomer
Middletown, Pennsylvania

NUTS AND DOLTS

This is for the misinformed dolts of the "55 Club." Nothing in this country is getting out of hand as badly as the way the government is getting into people's everyday lives.

You can be sure we on this side have written our congressmen, telling them to ignore you. You say government should have more stringent motorcycle safety standards. Would two more wheels and a canopy be what you have in mind?

And what you say about motorcyclists' image! How wrong can you be in one letter?

This is America. If you wish to live where the government makes your coffee and spoon feeds you, I'll see what I can do to scrape up the money to send you all to Russia. I think you should be happy, but not at the motorcyclists' expense.

Wayne Burton
San Angelo, Texas

Seems everyone wants the club to move to Moscow. Maybe the 55'ers would prefer a Minsk two-stroke—ed. ●

All letters must include the writer's name and address. Letters will be edited for length. Due to the volume of mail received, we regret we are unable to give personal responses.

Questions or comments? You can talk with the CYCLE GUIDE staff by calling (213) 328-5700. Phones will be answered Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.—5 p.m., Pacific Standard Time.

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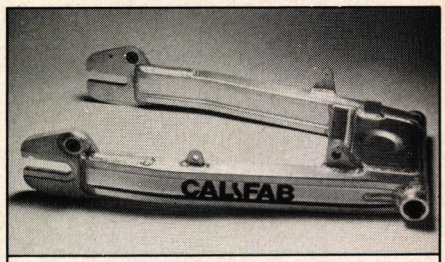

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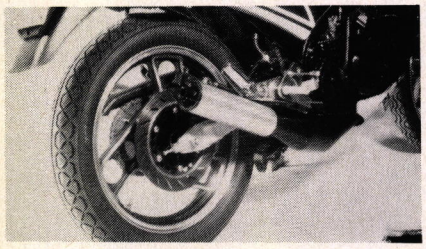

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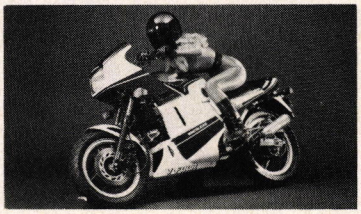

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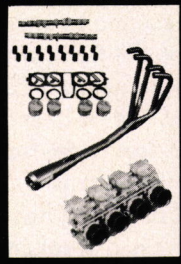

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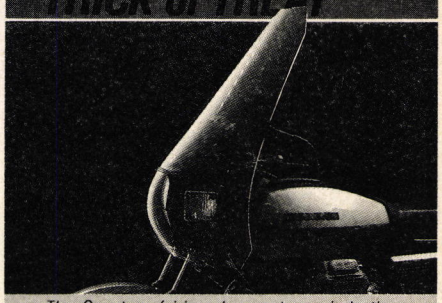

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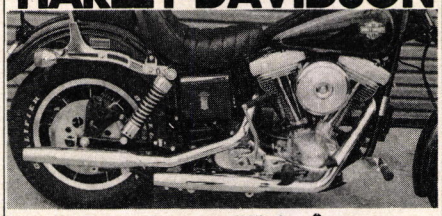

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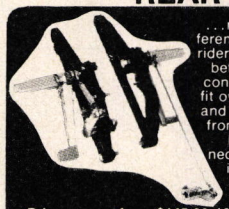

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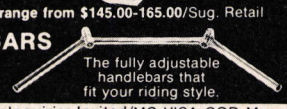

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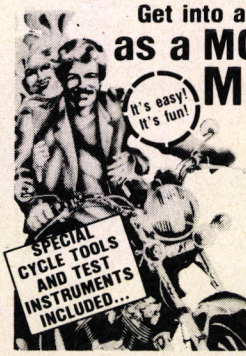

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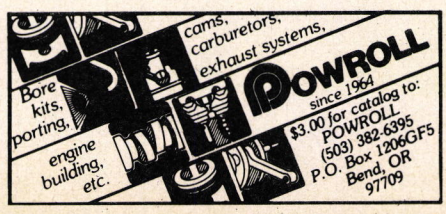

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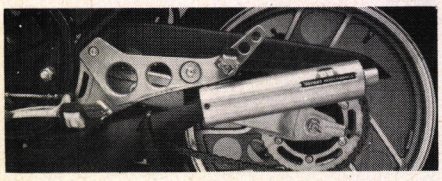

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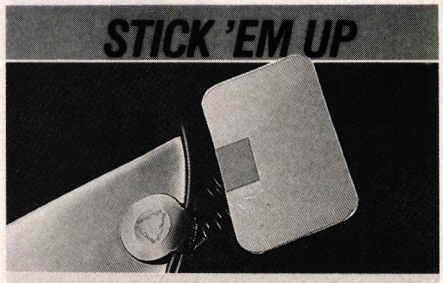

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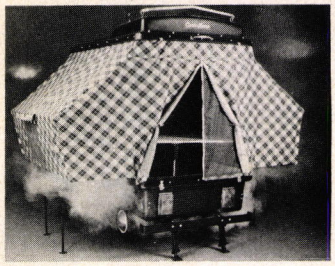

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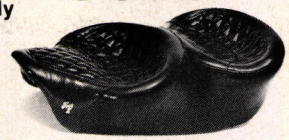

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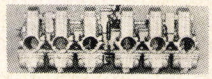

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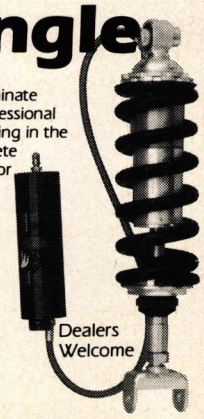

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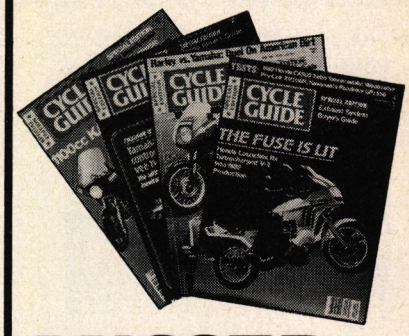

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